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CONTENTS

06 **20 Q: DIANE GUERRERO**
The Doom Patrol star sounds off on immigration, gender inequality and mental health

20 **ANNE MARIE FOX**
From her serendipitous discovery as a model to her work on film sets, our February 1982 Playmate tells us what it's like to conquer both sides of the camera

26 **CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR**
The world-renowned news authority marks the dawn of her "sexy 60s" in a fiery conversation with Jill Filipovic

36 **SEIZURE CITY**
Ahead of the 2028 Olympics, Los Angeles is cleaning up its act by pushing people out

52 **THE GOOD WITCH OF THE NORTHWEST**
Lindy West does not have to be shrill anymore

56 **HERITAGE: DIAMOND DAYS**
Light the candles: It's the Playboy Bunny's 60th. To celebrate, we talked to more than a dozen former cottontails about their favorite memories

74 **FANDOMINATION**
The latest disruption in the adult industry gives control back to performers

78 **IN DRUGS WE TRUST**
What if the US decriminalized drug possession? A veteran drug-policy expert offers some insight

90 **FORCE OF NATURE**
Princess Nokia conjures the four elements—giant snakes and all

12 **PICTORIAL**
COURTNEY COCO

42 **ON THE COVER**
VICTORIA KOZAKOVA

66 **PICTORIAL**
VALERIA KOVALENKO

82 **PICTORIAL**
CRISTAL

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PLAYBOY

Diane
Guerrero
20Q

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KELIA ANNE**

What makes a superhero? A voice, a cause and a will to change the world. The actress-activist, who headlines the HBO Max premiere of DC's **Doom Patrol**, has all three and isn't backing down

BY **SAMANTA HELOU HERNANDEZ**

Q1: *Orange is the New Black gave you your most notable role to date — Maritza Ramos, one of Litchfield Penitentiary's original inmates. On the show's final season, which debuted on Netflix in July, Ramos is deported to Colombia, mirroring what happened to your parents nearly two decades ago, when you were 14 years old. How did you prepare for those scenes?*

GUERRERO: I didn't have to look far to understand what it would be like for my character to be in jail once again, to be taken away. I know what that's like. My mom was taken in handcuffs to the airport and loaded up on a plane. It's something I've lived with my entire life. It's desperate; it's lonely. So I tried to go back to that time. Honestly, because of the work I'm doing today, I'm back there all the time. It was cathartic.

Q2: *So it wasn't retraumatizing?*

GUERRERO: No, no, no. What's retraumatizing is knowing that some fucking guy went to a Walmart and shot up people because he thought there was an invasion of Mexicans, because of what our president has said. That's retraumatizing. That instills fear in me that my life can be taken away at any time. Portraying it artistically, or even retelling my story, as hard as that is at times, is a means to an end. That's not retraumatizing.

Q3: *You revealed your parents' deportation in a 2014 op-ed piece in the Los Angeles Times, and in 2016 you released a memoir, In the Country We Love, about growing up in the U.S. without them. What motivated you to share your story and become an activist for immigration reform?*

GUERRERO: My career was moving very fast, but I felt I wasn't being honest. I felt deceitful not speaking about something that was very real to me. The issue of immigration was being tossed around inaccurately, and Trump was using the immigrant community as a scapegoat. What do you do when your community is flat-out labeled as rapists and murderers, and people run with that narrative? I couldn't offer a general response as a person of color, as a brown woman. I had to be like, "Yo, as a child of a separated family, as a child coming from a marginalized community that often experiences incarceration… I'm speaking to you as a child who lived all of this." I wanted people to look at me, see me and know what the fuck I'm about.

Q4: *How did you find a space to inhabit in this country?*

GUERRERO: If your circumstances bring you to a place where someone has to be charitable to you, you develop a habit of wanting to be invincible out of needing to appease folks. I got to the point of wanting to kill myself; that's how invincible I wanted to get. I had to see a therapist, who told me that it was okay to want things and to have dreams. I had to change the way I was programmed by reciting affirmations that I was worthy. That's how I began, little by little, to take up space again. But it's a work in progress. I work every day to not shrink myself, to allow myself to speak freely in places I'm scared to speak.

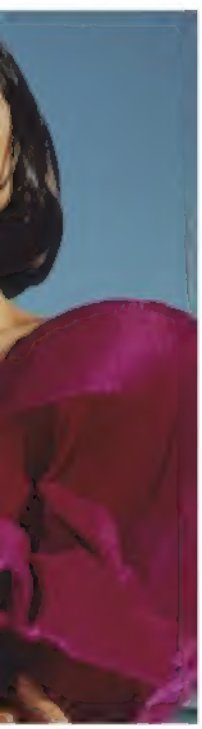
Q5: *In August you told Vanity Fair that you feared becoming a "poster child of deportation." Do you feel that you have?*

GUERRERO: No, I don't. I thought people were trying to pigeonhole me. In reality, only you can pigeonhole yourself. Only you can allow people to put you in a box. I am who I am. I care about what I care about. I'm strong in my convictions. I dictate my future. I dictate my outcome. Deportation, what happened to my family, is a sliver of who I am and what has happened to me. I have much more to say, much more to contribute.

Q6: *In 2015 you were named to the Obama administration's inaugural class of Presidential Ambassadors for Citizenship and Naturalization, which aimed to promote naturalization among some 8 million qualified people. But some immigration groups have called Barack Obama the "deporter in chief." How is what's happening now under President Donald Trump different from what happened under the previous administration?*

GUERRERO: The rhetoric isn't the same. Look, the Obama administration deported

People need each other. They need their families. That's what the American dream is all about.



a lot of families, but Obama also tried to implement immigration reform, and he was shut down. He didn't have the Senate and the House. He tried to enact an executive order and it was blocked by the courts. He was on his own. I understand that. I'm not at all saying that separating families is okay. He just didn't have the support.

Q7: *Your advocacy includes volunteering with the Immigrant Legal Resource Center and sitting on the board of directors of Mi Familia Vota, an organization that promotes civic engagement. What does common-sense immigration reform look like to you?*

GUERRERO: We update the visa system. Have we tried to set up a path to citizenship for people who are here, who have been here for years and who have supported the economy? No. Reform involves repealing laws that are hurting people. It means coming up with ways to keep our borders secure but which also create a new way forward. It does not mean deporting 11 million people and collapsing our economy. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is a relatively new thing. We don't need ICE. We don't need another agency going after families, putting them in jail solely to have higher body counts in these centers. We don't need to be putting money into this agency. Immigration is not a crime.

A lot of immigrant families are taken advantage of because we don't know our rights. I joined the Immigrant Legal Resource Center because it focuses on education. As soon as I educated myself, I felt more powerful. I could give information to folks and direct them in a healthier way. Compare that to my parents, who hired the first bozo who offered to help them with their visas. The immigration system is convoluted and made for people to misunderstand. I just try to be a portal for information and get it out there to the folks who need it.

Q8: *Speaking of ICE, in August, on the first day of school, authorities arrested 680 people suspected of working in the country illegally across seven Mississippi food-processing plants. Videos of children crying made the rounds online and sparked debates about coverage of this issue. Some argue that it's important for the public to see this kind of imagery. Others deem it exploitative and a form of trauma porn. What's your take?*

GUERRERO: People need to see it. Honestly, it was the first time I saw an image of what I felt like the day I came home and my folks weren't there. I don't know if I felt validated, because it's difficult

saying that; I know these kids are suffering. But I felt like that's what I've been trying to tell people. That's what it feels like. It's your first day of school. You love your parents. You wish they were there with you. We need to continue sharing images like those. I go through a lot not having my parents here. They're getting older. I'm getting older. I'm missing a lot of their milestones, and they're missing mine. That stunts your growth, in a way. People need each other. They need their families. That's what the fucking American dream is all about.

Q9: *Do you still believe in the American dream?*

GUERRERO: Of course. There are so many great things about this country and so many opportunities to be had. Equality for all and justice for all: That's the American dream I want to live, where everyone is treated fairly, where families are able to stay together, where this country provides what it promises for all families — not just white families and the families at the top. That's what I'm working toward. I mean, what else am I going to do?

Q10: *Is it possible for your parents to come back to the U.S. legally?*

GUERRERO: I would love for them to. This is where it all began. This is where our life started, and I would like to finish it here with them.

Q11: *You play Crazy Jane on DC's TV series Doom Patrol, whose second season premieres on HBO Max this spring. Crazy Jane experiences childhood trauma and develops superpowers as a result. What superpowers have you developed?*

GUERRERO: Becoming someone else. Here's an example: In college, I told someone that my parents were business owners, that they were in Colombia on a business venture and I was just here studying political science because I was interested in social justice and wanted to become a lawyer. The real reason I wanted to become a lawyer was so I could bring my parents back. In terms of relating to Jane, when she allows herself to work with others and surrender to community, she finds light in that. It's similar to when I surrender to my feelings and working with others and my community.

Q12: *Have you ever felt tokenized in your career?*

GUERRERO: Yeah, in auditions for "Drug Dealer Girlfriend Number One" and "Maid Number Two." That still happens. That's why being on Doom Patrol and getting the role of Crazy Jane has meant so much to me. To have a Latinx land a role normally reserved for a white person?

Latinxs aren't allowed to be superheroes. It's the strangest thing that we can't be seen in fantasy situations. Only white people can be in fantasies? Only white people can be superheroes? That's fucking preposterous.

Q13: *Crazy Jane also has dissociative identity disorder. There aren't many pop-culture representations of mental health issues in Latinx communities. You've struggled with depression, right?*

GUERRERO: Hey, we have mental health issues. This happens in our community. This needs to be looked at. If that goes overlooked, that person is going to spend a long time trying to figure it out. Who knows where they may or may not end up? What if my parents had seen a show or movie where they talked about that? We are so informed by what we watch and what's out there and available to us. That's why we have to fight to be in these spaces.

Q14: *Describe a moment when you realized what it means to be Latinx in Hollywood*

GUERRERO: I mean, just go out there and try to get a job. Get a job, and then try to get paid as much as your counterparts. That's when you realize you're not on the same playing field. Or you think you have an opportunity to work with a producer who says they're interested in your story, or interested in telling more immigration stories or stories that impact the Latinx community, and then you get an e-mail from this person and it starts with, "Hey, babe." That's when you realize, "Oh, I am a woman. I am a brown woman." This is still going on, and that's still something I have to fight

Q15: *Singing, not acting, was your introduction to performing. What does music signify to you?*

GUERRERO: It's how I stay alive, man. I love singing. I haven't done it in a professional setting yet, but it's coming. Music has saved me. It's the way I connect to my ancestry, to my family Every Sunday, my family used to put on music, clear out the furniture and dance in the living room. What those songs were saying meant something

Q16: *Like many Latinx people born in the 1980s, you listened to a lot of Selena growing up. What does she represent to you?*

GUERRERO: She represented the new Latin American, right? A person who was connected to her culture and could express herself so deeply but could also be very American a mash-up of two beautiful things. It's what I've always considered myself: a mashup of everything wonderful I could speak Spanish. I could enjoy all these beauties that my culture offered, like music, dance, food and language. But I could also enjoy American music, American food and American customs. I could fucking bring those all together and just be a superhero.

Q17: *What's your favorite Selena song?*

GUERRERO: "No Me Queda Más," of course. The most intense, just mad emo song.

Q18: *You've said that growing up you tried to be the good girl to the point of harming yourself if you thought you were sinning. You're now perceived to be a sex symbol. When did you embrace your sexuality?*

GUERRERO: It wasn't until very recently. I've always been sexual, but it was once something I tried to hide because I was afraid of falling into the stereotype of the sexualized Latina who thought she could get anywhere with her sexuality or fuck her way out of any situation. I have been able to fuck myself out of a couple of situations, but that is not my go-to My go-to is my brain and my heart and what I've learned from my family and community. That is how I've gotten ahead

Q19: *Do you feel your activism has ever been discounted because of your sex appeal?*

GUERRERO: Latinas especially are not allowed to be sexual and smart at the same time. It wasn't until after I wrote my book that I allowed myself to feel sexy and say, "Fuck it. I don't care what you say about my breasts. I don't care about what you say about how I look." Being comfortable with my sexuality is a part of me and in the message I want to give to people about loving themselves. It all goes into how I felt about my brown skin growing up, feeling that it was ugly or less than "A wide nose your indigenous nose is ugly. Your brown eyes aren't as interesting as blue ones." Shut off the noise that tells you you're not good enough or white enough, that your sexy is bad, that your sexy is crass in some way

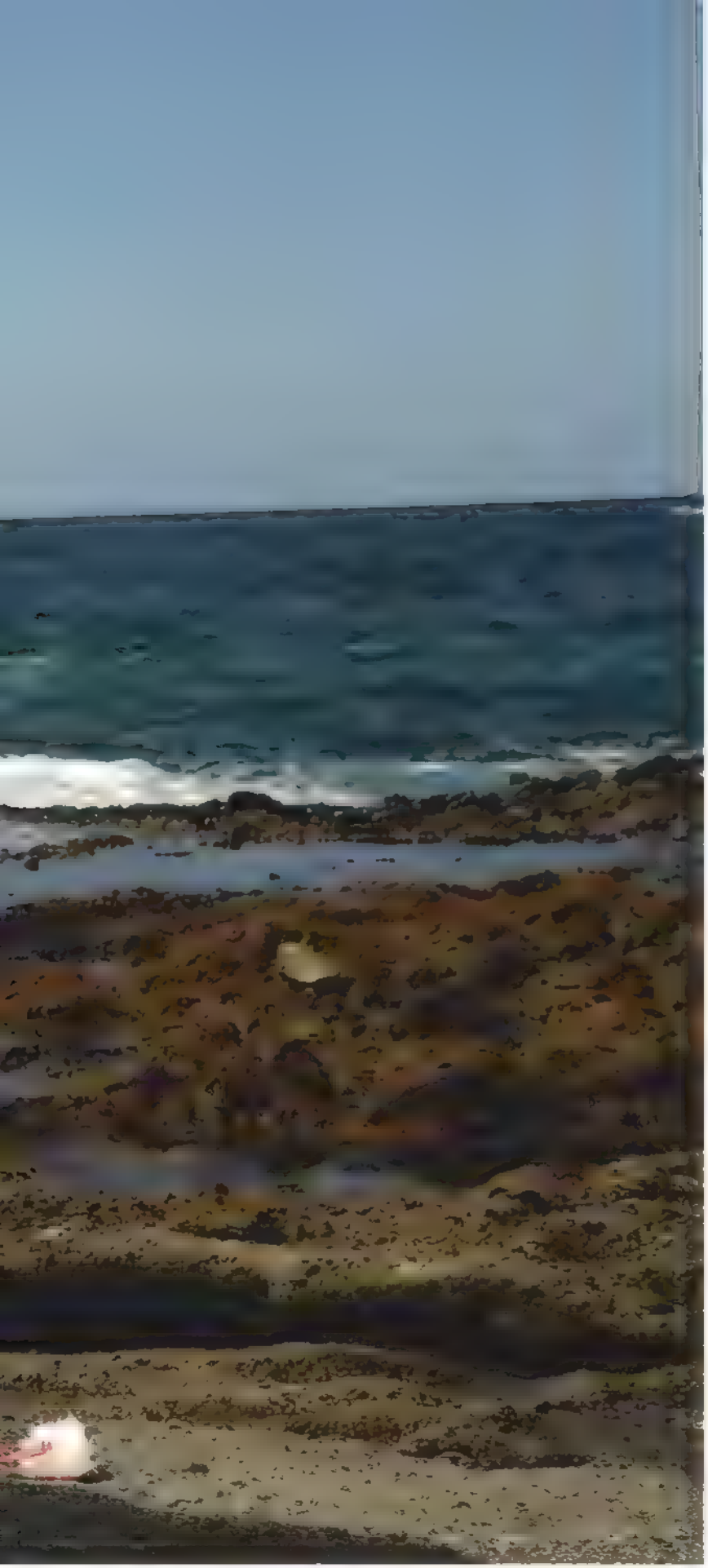
Q20: *When do you feel most alive?*

GUERRERO: When I'm singing or dancing. When I'm experiencing music through my veins. When I'm eating my mother's food. When those beans hit my mouth and just, I know what that is. It's life, you know? A life force for the heart. ■

THE
STUNNING

Courtney Coco

Instagram **@officialcourtneycoco**



Courtney Coco (aka. Coco) is a beautiful bubbly blonde with a heart of gold. Her friendly personality, sweet demeanor, and commitment to her career has made her a highly sought-after model. With her ever-expanding portfolio of work, she has gained notoriety not only in the US but around the world as well. Coco has been in over 50 magazines. From gracing the covers of high-profile magazines, featured internet spotlights, as well as high-quality print work, Coco has found herself in high demand. Whether it be well-established, or up-and-coming photographers and designers, she loves working with all skill levels and always finds a way to create something beautiful. Make no mistake, while the captivating look in her bright green eyes (which only about 2% of the world's population has by the way) conveys a total focus on being spontaneous and in the moment, behind them, there is a mind that is always thinking up new ways to challenge herself and to always plan for her future. With her penchant for organization and meticulous attention to detail, Coco knows how to achieve the goals she sets for herself. Without a doubt, her work ethic is evident from the many photographers who plan months in advance to again engage in new projects with her.

Coco attributes much of her success to staying centered. She does this by regularly engaging in her favorite hobbies: practicing Yoga, flexibility, and contortion. Coco finds that it brings her peace of mind and soul, fills her with positive energy, and dispels any stress or negativity from the world around not to mention it helps her maintain her beautifully svelte dancer's physique. She also is a musician and loves to sing and play both ukulele and banjolele.

There's no doubt that if you ask anyone who knows her well, Coco's ambition drives her to set many goals for herself. Among her many accomplishments, Coco has been featured in a number of music videos that span different genres (no categorizing this talent!), been profiled in numerous print and internet magazines, and has been in several commercials for well-known brands and also in films. Her plans for the future include taking on even larger projects such as these on stage and screen alike. Some of her goals include landing roles in major motion pictures and television, singing and dancing in musicals, recording her own music she wrote, as well as achieving a higher level of fame through her continued modeling career. If that weren't enough, Coco's ambition includes one day wanting to start a clothing line and also opening a yoga/pilates studio.

If you asked her what motivates her, or what gives her all of this positive energy to achieve so much, Coco would tell you that her main purpose in life is to make a positive difference in the lives of everyone around her. Whether it be directly or indirectly, it is her hope that through her successes she can inspire others to believe in themselves and to follow their dreams against all odds. As Coco would say, "Life is a dream and heaven is reality"-Courtney Coco

Congrats on your Playboy Australia feature! What does this mean to you? It has always been a goal of mine to model for Playboy and help explain the positivity of the brand. Playboy teaches about women's empowerment, women's rights, and equality. It also teaches about intimacy and sexuality. How sex should be seen as something beautiful, and not sinful. That nudity should be seen as art and not automatically perceived as something pornographic. Being a part of Playboy I want to help women be confident in themselves. Also, to help everyone, no matter what gender, feel comfortable talking about intimacy. I want to someday help women in other countries who are forced to cover their faces and entire bodies because it is seen as sexualized... I hope to help the world realize that bodies are beautiful and nudity is art.

What do you think of when it comes to Playboy and the iconic bunny? Ambitious women who are not afraid to teach women's rights, know how to be polite and classy, and how to have respect for ourselves and others.

What's your favorite color? Pink.

What type of music do you enjoy most? Favorite artist? I like almost all music, but my favorite is probably 60s and 70s music. I'm kind of a free spirit and sometimes wish I lived at that time. My favorite song currently is I Am Woman by Helen Reddy.

Favorite movie of all time? Favorite actor? Finding Nemo which I have watched 100s of times and have completely memorized LOL. I also love The Little Mermaid. I love the true meaning of it how strong we as women can be, never be afraid to take risks, follow your heart, and to follow your dreams even though they can be scary. I don't really have a favorite actor.

Do you prefer the beach or the pool? Beach! I am definitely a beach girl! I love just going to the beach and boogie boarding.

Read the book or watch the movie? I like both.

What is your favorite body part on you? Probably my green eyes.

What attracts you the most in a partner? I'm sapiosexual so intelligence.

Biggest turn-on? Intelligence, Ambition, Confidence, Handsome, Humor, Eye contact, Honesty, Kindness, Extrovert or Ambivert, Positive, Romance mixed with Dominance.

Biggest turn-off? Ignorance, Lazyness, Insecure, Me having to plan everything, Lack of intimacy, Negative, Very introverted.

Describe your perfect date... Going to a private beach, staying at our own big beach house, with him having planned everything.

Describe yourself using 3 adjectives... Bubbly, Ambitious, Kind.

Tell us one secret about you nobody knows... Well some people know but I'm vegetarian, love animals.

If you could change any one thing in the world, what would it be and why? For there to stop being so much hate and more love.

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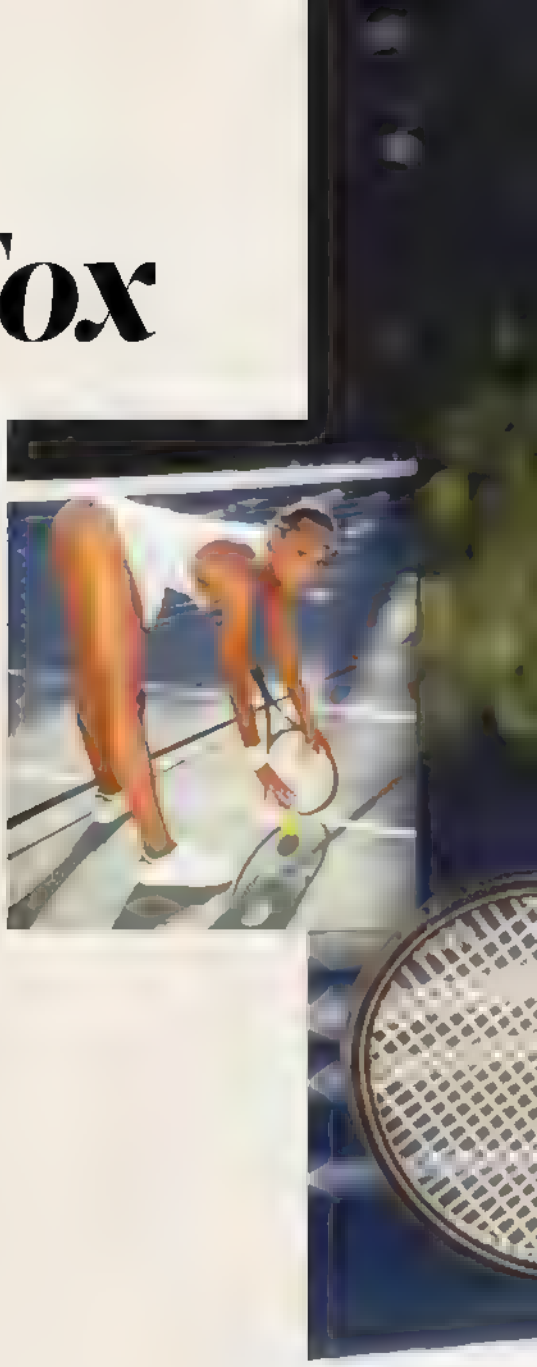
Annie Marie Fox

Our February 1982 Playmate on conquering both sides of the lens



Beneath a photo that shows me in midair, leaping into splits, my Playmate pictorial begins with this canny observation: "Anne Marie Fox is eager to get on with the business of being Anne Marie Fox." At 19, my ambition and my impatience to make my own way in the world was already apparent to my interviewer. Looking back, it's clear to me that playboy captured a turning point in my life. Although I didn't realize it at the time, my first experience in front of the camera catalyzed what would become my passion for working behind it.

• • •

When I was 11, I moved with my mother to West Germany, where I attended *Gymnasium* an academics-focused secondary school. The German educators were just as strict as the Catholic nuns I was used to, but my time in West Germany was formative. I absorbed and adopted valuable aspects of the culture; discipline and a strict work ethic still shape my daily habits. Without my exposure to European culture, I doubt I would be as open-minded and liberal-thinking as I am today. Travel is truly the best educator.

It was while I was abroad that I discovered my first playboy, hidden in my German-language tutor's bathroom. I remember thinking, I wish I had a body beautiful enough to be in playboy one day. Seven years later, after I had moved back to the States, my adolescent desire came true.

I was a freshman at Mount Saint Mary's College in Los Angeles when I agreed one day to go shopping with my roommate, who drove us out to Sunset Boulevard. Her parallel-parking skills were iffy at best, so I stepped out and guided her into the only available spot. As I remember it, when we went to cross the street, a friendly young man approached us and asked if we would be interested in meeting with his boss playboy's photo editor. We had happened to park directly outside her office window. My roommate and I glanced at each other, assuming it must be some sort of joke, then agreed to check it out as a dare. I expected the photo editor to be interested in my beautiful roommate, so it was a shock when she asked if I would consider posing. Playing along, I said, "Sure, why not?" "Fantastic!" she replied, then led me through the corridors into a massive, sun-drenched photo studio. The next day I received a call at my dorm informing me that Hugh Hefner had approved

This page and inset: *"I was photographed on the grounds of the Playboy Mansion, on the tennis court," Fox says. "Tennis was and still is my favorite sport, and I'm particularly fond of these semi-nude yet remarkably wholesome images."*

This page: "This photo of m
is a favorite. It already exudes
some palpable sensuality—a
hard for me to say that without
bragging a bit." Opening
spread and opposite page:
Outtakes from Prax's Playmate
shoot. "I received boxloads of
response to
mail still

my Polaroid; I could begin the Playmate shoot as soon as my semester ended.

• • •

My experience on set was incredible I was treated so well even spoiled a bit – and felt I was working in a creative environment with consummate professionals. Each day afforded me new insights on photography, lighting, production design, hair and makeup, and my own physicality Modeling for playboy was my first opportunity to experience both sides of the camera. I began to understand the symbiosis between subject and photographer.

The reality of being a Playmate didn't actually sink in until I saw my published pictorial for the first time. En route to a Playboy event, I picked up the magazine at an airport newsstand. As I flipped through the pages, I became distracted by a group of Japanese businessmen enthusiastically doing the very same They spotted me and did a double-take at my Centerfold. We all shared a knowing smile.

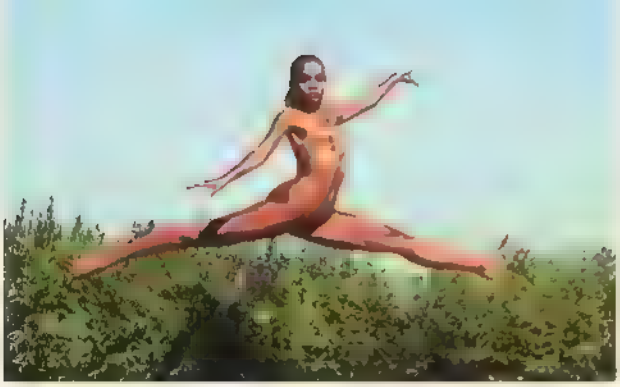
After my PLAYBOY pictorial came out, I dabbled in fashion modeling and commercial acting. I signed with a few agencies and moved to New York City to enroll at the Stella Adler Conservatory of Acting, but unfortunately the climate of the early 1980s was not ideal for African American actresses. The only jobs I managed to secure were mostly for background talent and the occasional television commercial This was hardly satisfying, so I began rethinking my options as an artist.

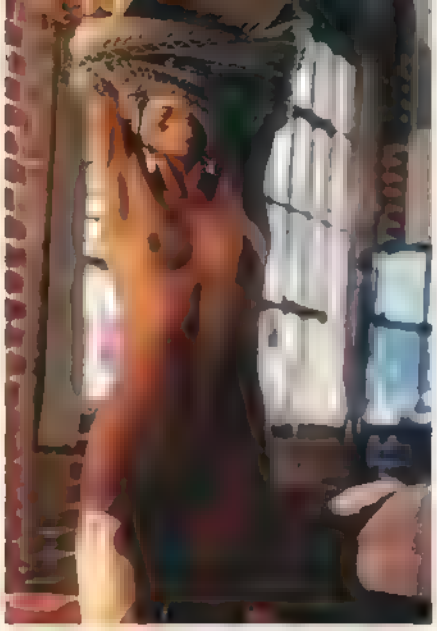
After four years honing my acting craft with Stella Adler, I attended Columbia University, majoring in English literature and minoring in film studies. Post-graduation, I applied to the International Center of Photography and was accepted. I apprenticed under the legendary Brigitte Lacombe and Nan Goldin, who equipped me with the technique and self-esteem to pursue photography professionally. Partly thanks to Goldin's encouragement, I came to realize my degrees from Columbia could be parlayed into a fulfilling photography career. This was a huge epiphany! Based on her unwavering support, I relocated to Italy after graduating to work on developing my first portfolio

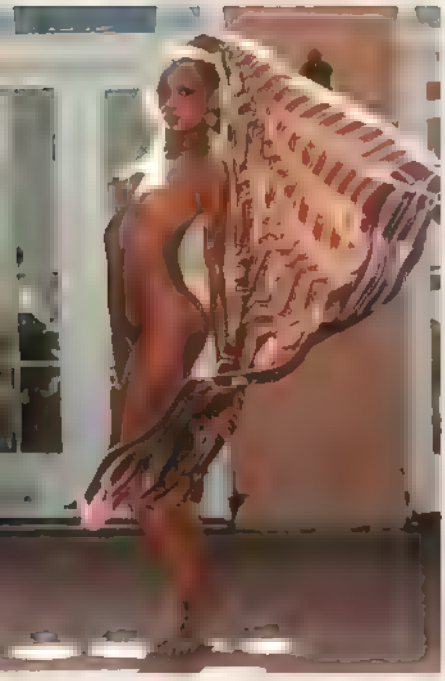
A few years later, I received an offer to head to London and be a photographer on the set of *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, directed by and co-starring Kenneth Branagh. My job was to capture the daily intensive prosthetics transformation of the lead actor, Robert De Niro, whose metamorphosis from man into the monster was fascinating to witness and to photograph As his character evolved, so did the prosthetics – an extra scar here, a wooden limb there. It was my first foray into set photography, and I found every aspect of the work energizing. I remember as I stood gaping at the scale and authenticity of this period piece, a distinct sensation washed over me. I was finally in my happy place: a creative environment surrounded by screenwriters, acclaimed actors and an über-talented director, all of whom I genuinely respected and admired, and me, camera in hand, given free rein to document this fleeting endeavor

• • •

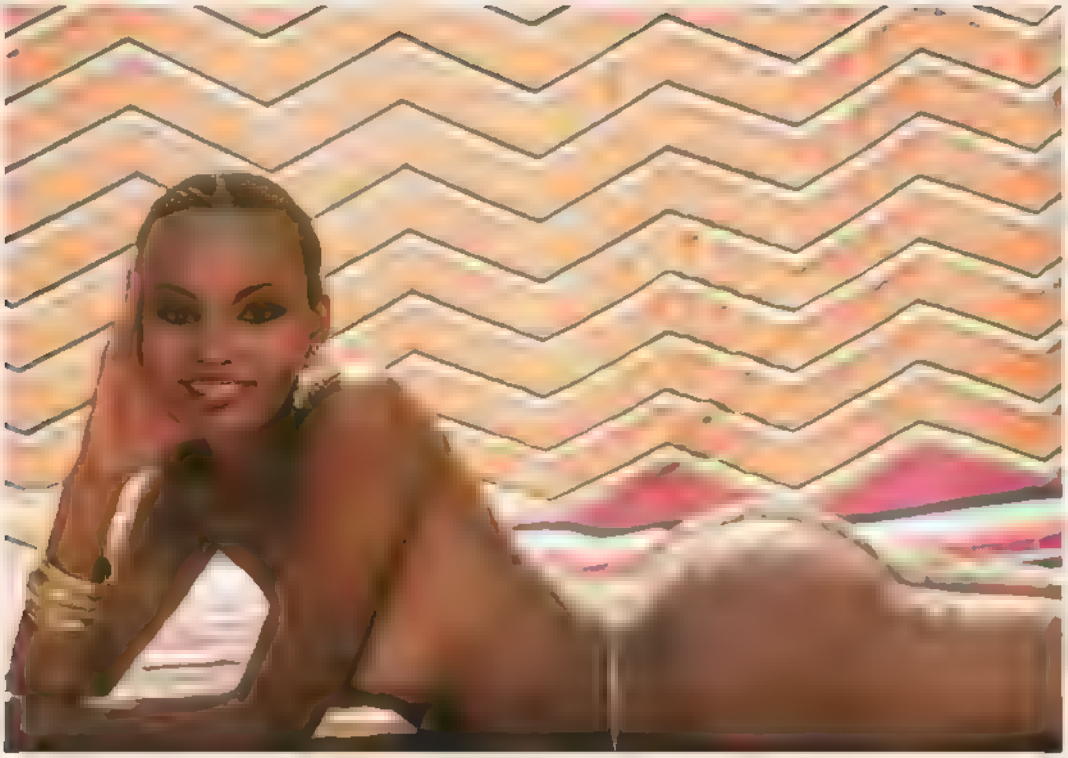
I still have specific career goals as a photographer that, hopefully, are not beyond my reach, and I can also envision myself writing and directing. But after more than 20 years in the industry, my larger dream has become to uplift and inspire others through my work. Each assignment still feels so visceral; each project takes up a sacred space within my subconscious I want to establish myself as a dedicated image maker, storyteller and role model for
all women and especially women of color. As much as my life has changed since becoming a Playmate, I continue to evolve as an artist. I'll always be eager to get on with the business of being me.







My happy place: a creative environment surrounded by people I respect and admire.



Opposite page, top left: I was practicing my jumping splits poolside, and Phillip Dixon managed to capture me in midair. He was a wonderful photographer; he took almost all my pictorial photos. I'll admit I always had a little crush on Phillip. "This page, following page and remaining photos opposite page: More outtakes from Fox's Playmate shoot. "My interest in photography played a crucial part in my decision to explore working as a model. I've always had a keen interest in classical painting and the nude figure as well, so when the opportunity to become a nude model presented itself as serendipitously as it did, it was a no-brainer to pose for playboy."

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR

A candid conversation with the unbreakable newswoman on everything from immigration to #MeToo, the power of the press to the dawn of her "sexy 60s"

An impeachment scandal is in full swing, and attacks on the press erupt almost daily from the White House. The year, of course, is 1973.

In his *Playboy Interview* from that year, legendary CBS anchor Walter Cronkite was "visibly steamed" by a question about the Nixon administration — which at that time was halfway between the Watergate break-in and the president's resignation — and its war on the news media. The fatherly newsman gave a strident critique of what he called a "well-directed campaign against the press, agreed upon in secret by members of the administration."

In 2019, another American president has declared war on the free press and is facing impeachment. But today's most venerated defender of newsmen's rights is not a newsman at all. It's Christiane Amanpour, the British Iranian war reporter turned CNN and PBS host. Crisp, elegant and unshakably poised, Amanpour uses her nightly CNN International show to delve into global affairs, interrogate newsmakers and occasionally rip to pieces the lies and obfuscations uttered by the world's most powerful men. Amanpour began her reporting career in a world just introduced to 24-hour news coverage, and even in an age of fake news and overflowing Twitter time lines she remains our guide across borders worldwide.

Born in London to a British Catholic mother and a much older Iranian Muslim father, Amanpour spent a charmed childhood in Tehran, riding Arabian stallions and skiing through the winter. At 11, she was sent to a British convent school; she would remain in the English educational system through high school. By the time she enrolled at the University of Rhode Island to study journalism, Iran was in the throes of a revolution. The Amanpour family fled to England, starting anew in a cramped flat. For the nascent journalist of the family, that historical moment marked a turning point. "I knew what I wanted to do," she said in a 2013 Mediabistro interview. "I wanted to be a foreign correspondent."

Starting out at Providence, Rhode Island's NBC affiliate, Amanpour soon heard about a new network called CNN. It was a ragtag place, she was told, where they might be more amenable to an olivetoned British-accented woman reporting the news. She made the switch, and Christiane Amanpour as we know her was born.

Frankly, the press has been part of the problem by thinking that objectivity means neutrality or false equivalence."

"There are hundreds of millions of women around the world who don't dare imagine that they have a right just to be happy."

"I'm pretty middle-of-the-road in most of my views except when it comes to genocide and climate truths."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHRISTELLE DE CASTRO**

Name a major conflict of the past 30 years, and Amanpour reported from it. Operation Desert Storm was her first, but she truly cut her teeth covering the Balkans, where her sense of moral outrage mounted as she watched Serb atrocities and the targeting of her friends and colleagues. Reporting the news, she concluded in Bosnia, requires accuracy and proportionality, not simplistic both-sidesism — an ethical code she has since called "truthful, not neutral."

That ethos has served her well as she's interviewed petulant leaders and seldom-questioned strongmen — she had an exclusive sit-down with soon-to-be ousted Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in the midst of the revolution in Cairo, was among the last journalists to interview Libya's Moammar Gadhafi and was once told to "be quiet" by Yasir Arafat before he hung up on her — and shapes her approach to the Trump era. It has also made her a credible voice in the age of #MeToo. She's a reporter for whom feminism is a simple commitment to equality, not an extremist takeover that threatens to destroy due process. And it makes her a fitting replacement for Charlie Rose, a man felled by his alleged predation on and harassment of younger women, and in whose place Amanpour & Company now airs on PBS.

In 1998 she married former U.S. assistant secretary of state James Rubin; two years later she had their son, Darius, at the age of 42. Now, at 61 and recently divorced after 20 years of marriage, Amanpour is opening a new chapter she calls her "sexy 60s." That storyline started in familiar territory: reporting. Her six-episode series Sex & Love Around the World premiered on Netflix in 2018, revealing Amanpour as a winning and surprisingly cheeky chronicler of female lust, pleasure and desire.

Amanpour sat down with journalist (and freelance CNN.com columnist) Jill Filipovic for playboy in Amanpour's office at CNN's London headquarters, where a sign on the door, illustrated with an AK-47, reads prohibit entrance with weapon. Filipovic reports, "Christiane Amanpour has little patience for theoretical musings about the state of journalism or feminism, and even less for armchair critics who haven't done the work or taken the risks. More than once she engaged with a question of mine before rejecting it, but even in her dismissals she was thorough and illuminating. Just sitting in her office — lined with trophies, a framed picture of her son atop her crowded desk — you can imagine she would remain collected and steely even when bullets are flying. You walk away holding her in tremendous esteem and, not that she'd give a damn, liking her a lot — even when she calls you out on the first sentence of your interview."

PLAYBOY: The president of the United States has called reporters scum and slime.
AMANPO UR: I cannot believe you started with the president of the United States.
PLAYBOY: Going for it, you know? He has targeted CNN in particular as a purveyor of fake news. Public trust in the media is at an all-time low in the United States. You've made a career out of telling some of the world's most important stories. What do you make of this moment for press freedom and the role of journalism in society?
AMANPO UR: The president has been very clear from the beginning that the strategy is to delegitimize whoever he thinks is an opponent, whether it's the press, a foreign leader, the chairman of the Federal Reserve — whoever seems to stand in his way. That's his thing. Our job is to not accept that framing from anybody who seeks to delegitimize the free, independent, democratically protected press. I have a platform to bring the truth, to bring evidence, to bring stories, to bring what's really happening in the world and in the United States to the audience. I think the rest of it is up to the audience. They now have responsibility.
PLAYBOY: But lots of viewers aren't taking that on, many are simply seekin out publications and television shows that confirm their prior beliefs. Are viewers the ones who are abdicating their civic responsibility?
AMANPO UR: There are a lot of people who believe the conspiracy theories and the lies that are told about us or about what's going on in the world. But I notice the backlash to all these lies and conspiracy theories, and I appreciate the fact that our ratings are up, readership is up, subscription is up for real truth-telling platforms. I'm not a Pollyanna. I don't think we're out of danger. I think, though, that those of us who have been doing this for a long time, who are experienced and know where the truth lies, have a responsibility to stand up for the truth — even in public, even if it's unpopular.
PLAYBOY: You've risked your life for stories. Friends and colleagues of yours have given their lives to bring us the news. Just on a visceral human level, how does it feel when you hear the president of the United States call reporters slime?
AMANPO UR: I haven't heard the word slime, but I'm hurt and obviously offended when I hear an absolutely vital

pillar of democracy and civil society being trashed from within. But it also redoubles my commitment to fighting against it. I know firsthand the danger of living in a world where lies are portrayed as facts. For me, the difference between truth and lies is the difference between freedom and democracy and dictatorship. So I'm very troubled by this. But I'd still love to interview President Trump.

PLAYBOY: There's a debate roiling the press right now about how to cover the president's lies — or those of anyone who comes face-to-face with journalists and spreads absolute falsities. How much airtime do you give that?

AMANPO UR: You don't. You counter it. The concept of fake news is not something Donald Trump invented. Others might have called it propaganda. Just in fairly recent history, the Soviet Union was a master of this. The Soviets, now the Russians — that's their war by other means. That's how they fight to keep dominance in their sphere. We've got plenty of experience, we in this free press, and we know how to counter it. We just have to do that without getting hysterical, overly despondent and overly emotional.

PLAYBOY: The New Yorker and Errol Morris both got in hot water for interviewing or planning to interview Steve Bannon. The argument was essentially that he's a propagandist, not someone whose voice should be amplified, which exemplified the idea of de-platforming. Is there anyone you would never interview or have on your show?

AMANPO UR: Right now I refuse to have climate deniers on my show. I will not have people who deny scientific evidence. I'm very much wedded to the concept of fact-based, evidence-based empirical truth. People who say it doesn't exist are just equivocating and are relativists. Frankly, the press has been part of the problem by thinking that objectivity means neutrality or false equivalence. It no more means that when we're discussing climate and science than it does when we're talking about genocide and ethnic cleansing. When you pretend you're being objective by equating unequal facts and unequal moralities, you're not telling the truth. You're telling lies. In the worst case, you're an accomplice to the worst results of that.

PLAYBOY: But how do you navigate moral outrage in a place where you don't know the culture very well, where you're an outsider?

AMANPO UR: I hope this doesn't sound arrogant, but I've grown up all over the world. I've traveled all over the world. I grew up in a patriarchal society with a Muslim father and a Catholic mother — an Iranian father, a British mother. I was taught from a very young age about the morals we learn first and foremost through our religious upbringing, whether it's Christian, Jewish, Muslim or whatever. Thou shall not kill. Respect your father and your mother. Thou shall not lie. All those things we grow up with form the basis of a moral platform. It's true that I don't know the ins and outs of every single culture, but I've learned a lot over the 30 years I've traveled the world examining people's cultures. I learn as I go. But I don't consider my reporting to be some kind of moral diatribe; I look to the humanity of every situation. I see people in every story I cover, people with lives and loves and stories to tell who aren't just statistics in war or famine or whatever political crisis they might be caught up in.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever felt that the push to find truth in a complicated situation and not be focused on neutrality has taken you away from your obligations as a reporter?

AMANPO UR: Never. I challenge anybody to produce any piece of my reporting they think fits that description. Never. Which is not to say I got everything right all the time. One of the things I like about going places and spending a long time there is that the story comes into focus ever more sharply. I've never presumed to be an expert from day one on the ground. I've always said that the first stories you see will inevitably be pretty simple. The longer you're there, the more the layers will manifest themselves.

PLAYBOY: One criticism of foreign correspondence as a field is that it's neocolonial: Foreign correspondents go in, extract news from poorer countries and run stories that are simplistic or sensational or that simply portray other cultures as backward and in need of saving. Is there a diversity problem in international reporting?

AMANPO UR: Do I think there should be more diversity? One hundred percent. Do I think there should be more gender equity? Do I think there should be diversity in every level of news coverage, and in every level of global society? Yes, I absolutely do. But do I apologize? Certainly not. If we didn't do it, who would? The typical complaint comes from armchair warriors sitting at home in their pajamas, tweeting, instagramming and facebooking from 10,000 miles away. Tell me, which is worse? That's a whole lot worse than those of us who get up and go there and find the stories.

I have no time for this conversation about whether we should or shouldn't be there.

PLAYBOY: I think there are two arguments. One would be that it's unbalanced: How many Africans are in the White House press corps? The other is that publications like The New York Times and networks like CNN should be relying more on local journalists to cover their own nations.

AMANPO UR: I think this criticism is crap, if you want my honest opinion. As I said, what is the other option? Furthermore, things are changing, and I think that criticism is out-of-date. I think my profession was instrumental in turning around the West's indifference to Bosnia and then to Kosovo. We helped spur our democracies to intervene, to stop a genocidal slaughter in Europe and therefore save their own dignities and standings as well as lives on the ground. That's a good thing. We did that, and I'm proud of it. We might have had that impact had we been en masse in Syria, but we weren't, because ISIS was beheading people, starting with poor James Foley. And so we were not able to go there. Who did we rely on? Syrians, Syrian journalists. They told the story of their war.

PLAYBOY: At great personal risk.

AMANPO UR: At great personal risk and with great professionalism. I ask myself, what would Obama have done if the same press corps that was in Bosnia in the 1990s had been in Syria, telling the same human stories day after day and making it impossible for our democracies to turn their heads in the face of wanton slaughter and wholesale violation of all the values and policies the West says it not only upholds but seeks to promote around the world? It's a terrible realization that we failed in Syria. The Syrian journalists did a great job, but we failed. The Trump administration is now pulling out American forces, and ISIS is not defeated.

We failed in Rwanda. We didn't go to Rwanda because, if I'm not mistaken, the African and the Western press were focused on the goodnews story of Nelson Mandela's election in South Africa, a fantastic story. They were focused on O.J. Simpson in the United States. And in three months, 800,000 to 1 million black people were slaughtered in Rwanda. That's a huge burden to bear. What I'm saying is that I have no time for this conversation about whether we should or shouldn't be there.

PLAYBOY: Speaking of things you might have no time for, you're one of the most famous female journalists in the world. What are you sick of getting asked about being a woman in this field?

AMANPO UR: Oh, that's interesting. What am I sick of getting asked? "What does it mean to be a woman in this field?" More and more women have joined this particular profession as foreign correspondents, in front of the camera, behind the camera, on shows and the like. That's a huge change from when I started out in 1990. But until we have more women at the top of news organizations, there will still be an issue not with how women are represented but how the world is represented.

Treating women equally is not just a human right or a charity. If women as well as men in our work were determining what stories were going to be covered so there wasn't such a massive imbalance, eventually you would get a different look at the world. Women have made a big difference in how we cover the world — and I think our male colleagues have learned from us — because in addition to covering the bang-bang and the hardware and all of that, our natural instinct is that everyone has a human story. The thing I've learned throughout my career, and I guess from my childhood, is that we're all very similar. We all, wherever we come from, have the same hopes, the same dreams, the same desires. And we need to emphasize that more and more, because there's a sense these days — especially with nationalism, populism and anti-immigration, whether it's in the United States, parts of Europe or elsewhere — that somehow there is a group of people who are less than human, who are really scary, who would do us harm, who would, if we let them in, somehow destroy our countries. It's not borne out by the facts, and it's sad that today those thoughts and those politics are still being perpetrated. Too many political leaders are appealing to the fear factor rather than to the hope factor.

What am I sick of getting asked? "What does it mean to be a woman in this field?"

PLAYBOY: Give me an example: When have you covered a story differently?

AMANPO UR: In my coverage of the war in Bosnia I almost never went to the briefings at the beginning, and I didn't do the politics. I remember telling stories of what it was like as an ordinary person to be caught in a medieval siege from 1992 all the way through the 1990s until the war was stopped. The first winter, I'll never forget, professors, engineers, scientists, artists were cutting down trees for wood, burning their books for heat, picking grass and herbs from the central islands along Sniper Alley, just trying to survive.

PLAYBOY: Your personal and professional lives have hinged on migration and movement. What perspective do you wish Americans had on the immigration debate? How could we be thinking about it differently?

AMANPO UR: First and foremost it is absolutely true that over many, many years the United States administrations and Congress have failed to implement a rational immigration-reform process, program or set of laws. They've just failed. What we're seeing is a whole load of ad hoc policies that are made with a huge amount of short-termism that then affect real human beings. So I think one story that's not told enough about the Southern border of the United States is the push factor: What is causing people to get up and take that very dangerous route by foot, many with their families, to come from Central America or wherever it might be to try to find refuge? The economic and environmental fallout there is not being told.

People wish to stay in their own countries if they can. That's the one thing I've learned from traveling and covering war and refugees. It's not as if everybody's dying to suddenly leave their countries and come to the U.S. Most people who come are forced to by crime, war, famine, dictatorship or lack of freedom in their own countries. They would rather stay where they are. That's why, to me, it would seem that the best foreign policy of a nation is not only to keep itself and its economy and standing in the world secure but also to do its utmost not to close its borders and hunker down; a nation needs to do what it can to make other parts of the world livable. I wish leaders could look a bit more broadly at what would really prevent a mass influx of people seeking basic safety and freedom and something to eat.

PLAYBOY: So I have this quote from you. In Sheila Weller's book The News Sorority, you say, "All my energy, my emotion, my intellect went into my work. During the '90s, people would ask me, 'When are you going to settle down?' And I'd say, 'I don't think I'll ever have a child.'" And then you did. What changed?

AMANPO UR: What changed is that I felt I needed to humanize myself a little. Actually it was pretty funny. One of my producers, Robert Wiener, was instrumental in CNN's coverage of Baghdad during the war. He once said to me, "So, Christiane, what are you going to do,

snuggle up with all your awards? Don't you think you need to get serious about your personal life?" I suddenly started to think about it, and I said, "Yeah, maybe I should focus a little bit more on my personal life and see what happens." And I did. I started to make myself more open. I'd had great love affairs in the field, on the road, but I was absolutely committed to my career and to the stories. I could not have done what I did had I had the responsibility to stay alive and to keep leaving the field and going home. I couldn't have done it, end of story. I didn't really think about my own safety. You're young, you think you're immortal, you don't necessarily have anybody to stay alive for. You're balls to the wall. You're doing the job and you're loving it. So I was a late starter in that regard. I had my kid at 42, and it is literally the joy of my life. But I can tell you one thing. As soon as I had my child, I suddenly started to feel more nervous about going overseas, about going to war zones, about maybe succumbing, like so many of my friends and colleagues had done.

PLAYBOY: I don't mean to sound insensitive, but why have a kid then?

AMANPO UR: Well, it's a good question. To be honest, I didn't necessarily think I had to have a kid, but I cannot imagine my life as rich as it has been since I've had my kid. Nothing in the world will match what my child means to me. Nothing, nothing, nothing.

But fast-forward now to these young kids. I had a 26-year old young man on my show recently, a member of Extinction Rebellion, who, like many millennials, are asking themselves if they're going to have children. Are they going to be able to bring children into this world we've created for them through our wanton short-termism and greed? That's a whole different existential crisis than we had in my generation. Would I have a kid? Well, for me the question was could I still be a professional. Today the question is whether it's moral to bring a child into this world. These are tough issues our young people are wrestling with.

PLAYBOY: Your show replaced Charlie Rose's on PBS after he was sacked for sexual harassment. He's just one of a long list a of men whose behavior has gotten them removed from their positions as part of the #MeToo movement.

AMANPO UR: And all of them still deny it.

PLAYBOY: You told Variety that you don't think the pendulum has swung too far. It's a question everyone's being asked: "Has #MeToo gone too far?" You said no. But you also said we can't have a one-sizefits- all solution to these issues.

AMANPO UR: Correct, and those are not two opposing thoughts. Do I think it's gone too far? The answer for me is categorically no. This movement has completely changed the dynamic of the world. It's not perfect. It's not that now every woman is safe or every woman has a clear path up in her career or every woman can get the truth out. That's not the case. What it has done is shift in an irreversible way the expectations around what women have been forced to endure in silence. It has shifted entirely the notion of consent. I believe that in order to really change this, men have to be involved in the solutions. And I say that because I'm a feminist, because I'm the mother of a boy and I want my boy to grow up in a safe, consensual society, hand in hand with women, and because I believe this world will never get any better unless in every level of society men and women are on equal footing and working together.

How much luckier can I get? Seriously—it's not a rhetorical question.

PLAYBOY: So outside of the most obvious criminal cases that should be dealt with by the justice system, what does a solution look like?

AMANPO UR: Obviously crimes have been committed. We should not have people protecting themselves by having their lawyers or lobbyists or whoever they are getting victims to sign nondisclosure agreements, forcing people to accept pittances as payoffs or payouts. We should hold the serious offenders accountable, 100 percent. But not every action is a criminal action. And not every action is the same. I think a huge amount of effort and accountability can be meted out without necessarily firing or destroying somebody's life.

But much like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa or those kinds of post-conflict resolutions, it requires all sides — in this case all genders — to work together. It requires those whose wrongdoing is less than a criminal wrongdoing to fess up, to work with whoever they need to work with on whatever level to atone. Some people have perhaps been accused unfairly, and we need to be very aware of that, because we're not going to have a solid foundation for this movement if it looks like it's unfair and just a witch hunt.

PLAYBOY: One thing feminists emphasize about this movement is that, though we talk about sexual harassment, it's really not about sex, it's about power.

AMANPO UR: And sex.

PLAYBOY: And it's about the ways in which sexually harassing women are more than just "it makes us feel bad." It's that it systematically pushes us out of opportunities and out of particular fields. So is part of the solution to replace the men who have done wrong with women?

AMANPO UR: Well, listen, you're going to ask me because that's my case. Charlie Rose does not accept these accusations. You have to put his perspective in it as well. But I can say only this: I am absolutely thrilled and I think it's a great statement that a woman has taken this job at this particular time. I'm not just a token woman. I'm a woman who has risen through the ranks and hopefully proved my competence, my integrity and my lack of compromise on those issues. So I think it's completely and utterly apt. The amount of feedback I've had from women absolutely confirms that for me. Actually, I don't even think it should be a question. I think women have proved themselves over and over again, and the notion that we should be grateful for any tidbits or crumbs or pairing with anybody else is ancient history. What irritates me is that when people of privilege complain about, let's say, a woman getting this job, they're complaining about

the field being level. That's all. And that's not acceptable We have to have a level playing field now.

PLAYBOY: The #MeToo observation I've found most resonant comes from Rebecca Traister in New York magazine. "In hearing these individual tales, we're not only learning about individual trespasses, but for the first time getting a view of the matrix in which we've all been living. We see that the men who have had the power to abuse women's bodies and psyches throughout their careers are in many cases also the ones in charge of our political and cultural stories." How do you think it changes the dynamic to have women like you now in a position of telling our political and cultural stories?

AMANPO UR: First and foremost, the ultimate contradiction to all of these accusations against Harvey Weinstein is that he's been accused of some very serious criminal wrongdoing and misconduct against women, and yet he produced some great films. There's no doubt about it; our cultural environment might have been poorer without those films. But the point you're making is correct. If we accept that our society's story will be told by only one gender, it's not the whole story. That's what we're still struggling for It will take decades, if not centuries, more. And whoever's in a position of power, privilege and entitlement lets go of it with great difficulty What they need to know is that most of us are not looking to overtake and dominate; we want to share in the telling of our personal and global narrative, or our historical narrative won't be told accurately.

PLAYBOY: I don't work in many conflict zones, but I do work in humanitarian crisis zones. One of the more jarring things for me is coming home from a crisis and having a nice bottle of wine and dinner in a beautiful restaurant It so deeply highlights the random luck of being born in one place or another. How do you navigate that contrast, and does it ever get easier to be in the places you work and then come back to a beautiful home in London?

AMANPO UR: I remember very strongly the first times I came out of the siege of Sarajevo to take a break. I would come out for maybe a couple of weeks and then be there for several months and then come out again for a couple of weeks, et cetera. I remember deep feelings of guilt when I left. I thought it was just me, but now I know it's very common. I don't even think it's post-traumatic stress disorder, it's stress-of-the-moment disorder, when you leave whoever it is behind, in whatever nightmare scenario you've all been in together, and feel guilty for them, for their basic physical safety. You think you're deserting the cause, so to speak You're deserting colleagues, friends, people, the story.

I've had those feelings and I've pushed the limits of getting people out of the siege of Sarajevo. I did things that I would have been in deep, deep trouble for had it been known at the time I used every means possible to extract some very vulnerable people from Sarajevo. It wasn't allowed, but I did it along with my team members, and I'm pleased and proud of that.

PLAYBOY: Whom did you extract?

AMANPO UR: I extracted a husband, wife and their kid and made up all sorts of stories as to why they had to be processed through the official lines, get on a military flight, get out, come to the United States, et cetera. I even said the kid worked for a kids' program on CNN. It was only mildly stretching the truth. In any event, I saved their lives, we saved their lives, and I have nothing to apologize for Again, what's the alternative? Our oath, or mine, is do no harm. I don't feel the necessity not to come home and have a glass of wine and see my friends and family. In fact, I believe that kept me sane and that I could, like many people, have been driven completely mad had I stayed there the entire time with no break. And then what good would I have been? What story would I have told? I would have been totally compromised. One of my proudest accomplishments is that I emerged sane from all these horrendous things I've seen.

PLAYBOY: Were there ever moments when you felt you'd crossed over, that you were at a point where you were mentally unwell?

AMANPO UR: Nope. Never Certainly not at the time and not since, but I think it's an important question, because there are degrees thereof. Some people are much more affected, some people less. Some people are obviously affected, some people hide it. I think mental health is an issue we absolutely have to talk about. And we are, more and more and more. I credit CNN and all the news organizations that very early on in the Bosnian war and certainly after 9/11 realized they were sending their employees into the worst, most extreme experiences of the human condition, and that it will have an effect

There's no doubt I've been affected. And I would say that sometimes I'm very stressed, sometimes I'm anxious, sometimes I can maybe talk loudly or whatever. I put it all down to the effects of what I went through. I'm not ashamed. I don't have screaming PTSD, but I certainly have... I don't know. I don't even know how to describe it

PLAYBOY: A normal human reaction?

AMANPO UR: It's a normal human reaction, but you know what? It's to an abnormal human experience. Not only what happens to us, but to watch what's happening to the people we're covering It's inhuman what we've had to witness And that's why I make no apologies for any of us who go and do it. You can be white, you can be rich, you can be poor, you can be any other color. But go and tell the stories and tell them honestly and bring back the information

PLAYBOY: How did you not burn out?

AMANPO UR: I think because I came back enough, but also I obviously have a huge amount of stamina, mental and physical. I am a very optimistic person. I have faith. I was always in the warm embrace of my family and friends. And that's what I would return to. I would come back to my family and friends and just try to have as normal and as beautiful a life as I could. I would go to museums, go to good films, go to lovely gardens with beautiful plantings. I would gravitate toward beauty, and it was an antidote. I knew early on even if I didn't know, I knew subconsciously that I had to come back and do things that would cauterize the wounds

PLAYBOY: You've been described many times as having nerves of steel, but there must be moments when you're absolutely terrified.

AMANPO UR: Yeah

PLAYBOY: What were some of those moments when you felt the most frightened, and how did you navigate that?

AMANPO UR: I'd never really been in a war zone before Bosnia. I mean, yes, there was the first Gulf war, but that was much more about big armies facing off against each other It was much more of a set piece, though it was pretty scary when we were in Iraq under Saddam Hussein's whim But to be in Bosnia in a medieval siege with indiscriminate shelling of civilians and we were obviously among the civilians, we didn't have a special journalistic safe haven somewhere — was very scary when I first encountered it. And then you just develop a certain awareness. I always touch wood and say

I'm very lucky. Many of my friends and colleagues were not so lucky. You can't allow those fears and those emotions in the moment to paralyze you. It's only afterward that you realize what you've been through, perhaps the crazy risks you've taken. The whole way through the war, it wasn't that I wasn't afraid, it was that I managed the fear.

PLAYBOY: Are you a person of faith?

AMANPOUR: Yeah.

PLAYBOY: Can you tell me more about that?

AMANPOUR: Not really. I mean, it's nothing huge. I was brought up Catholic by my mother, and I went to a Catholic convent. As I said at the beginning, that whole early childhood education formed my human and moral view of the world. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is the basic golden rule, isn't it, of Christianity? I'm not an extremist. I'm pretty middle-of-the-road in most of my views except when it comes to genocide and climate truths.

PLAYBOY: But you're also a feminist, right?

AMANPOUR: Oh, I'm definitely a feminist, but that's middle-of-the-road.

PLAYBOY: But the church is not exactly middle-of-the-road.

AMANPOUR: No, it's not. So those are issues. When I have interviews with church leaders, for instance, I go very deep into that. I always bring up the issue of women in the Catholic Church.

PLAYBOY: Is that a challenge personally? Not to do your job, but to reconcile your faith with some of what the church does?

AMANPOUR: No, no, no. Who I worry about offending is my mother, who watches. But for me, it's an absolute nobrainer. I'm sorry my faith has so much to account for and to atone for, but you know what? All faiths do.

PLAYBOY: It sounds like you're in a pretty fabulous professional place right now, but you told British Vogue that you're thinking of putting yourself back out in the field again. "It's time for my third act," you said. In your dream universe, what's the third act?

AMANPOUR: I don't yet know what my third act is. I'm on the cusp certainly in my chronological life. I'm not sure how it's going to manifest. What I do know is that I love being in the field, not necessarily under fire, but doing things like *Sex & Love Around the World*. I really enjoyed that, because even though it had that title, it wasn't about the seedy underbelly of sex that I've done so much on as a reporter—the trafficking, the prostitution, the sex-selective abortions of female fetuses, the rape and all the horrible stuff. This was completely different. This was about love and intimacy and how different societies define it and how they experience it.

PLAYBOY: You mentioned your life as a young single foreign correspondent and the affairs, and that's kind of the movie picture. In between firefights everybody's having great romances and love affairs. How did being a young single woman in that field shape your views on sex and love and relationships?

AMANPOUR: I was free in those years. I was on the road. I didn't have any constraints from family, and I was able to explore my emotional and physical desires. I know it's a cliché. As one male colleague used to say, wheels up, rings off. Now, I wasn't married, so there was no ring to take off, but I met fantastic people who had the same worldview. We were on the front lines together. We believed in the same struggle. We were proud of our work and thought we were doing something that made the world a better place. As I say, you're on the extreme end of human experience in every way, even in your love affairs. It was great. And I'm still friends with a lot of them.

PLAYBOY: You don't have to name names, but any you remember particularly fondly?

AMANPOUR: Very fondly. The person who was my main boyfriend for the longest time. Yeah, very fondly.

PLAYBOY: What did you take away from that relationship?

AMANPOUR: That it wouldn't have lasted because we were both too focused on our careers.

PLAYBOY: In your personal life and now in your reporting on sex and that realm of human experience for your *Sex & Love Around the World* series, what might be informative or useful to, let's say, a typical Playboy reader, who's probably a man? What does he need to know?

AMANPOUR: Okay, that's interesting. I think he needs to know what I discovered reporting the *Sex & Love series:* not only the obvious, consent and all the rest of it, but that a man needs to be sensitive to what makes a woman tick, what it is that satisfies a woman emotionally, physically, sexually. I've noticed from a lot of the interviews I've done around this subject that the couples who feel the most heard are those who talk together the most and express their desires to each other. Communication came across as one of the most significant aspects of what makes relationships successful or not. That's important for men to understand, because I think men traditionally are less communicative. Women have the reputation of always wanting to talk, but we do it because we want to break down barriers—our own barriers, but also the barriers that may be preventing couples from really getting to know each other.

PLAYBOY: Sex can be quite hard to talk about, even in very libertine societies.

AMANPOUR: Yes and no. I was so amazed by how open these girls and women were to me. I mean, when I asked this Afghan woman who was pregnant with her third child—she was probably no more than 20—I said to her, "Are you happy?" and the translator said, "Are you sure you want me to ask her that question?" She said in that society and in that milieu, it can be a subversive question. And that is perhaps one of the most important takeaways from the entire series for me, because it just summed up everything: There are hundreds of millions of women around the world who don't dare imagine they have a right not just to be happy but to ask for happiness and love and care from their partners. That was an eye-opener to me.

PLAYBOY: The series, to me, was quite unexpected. I'm wondering if you learned anything in your reporting that feels resonant to this period in your life—your "sexy 60s."

AMANPOUR: That's a slogan I made up to make myself feel better. But in many ways there's a freedom that comes with a certain age. I'm really lucky. I'm still gainfully employed, doing something incredibly satisfying on a really important network with a really great audience around the world and around the United States. How much luckier can I get? Seriously—it's not a rhetorical question. I've received a lot, and I hope I've given back a lot. I hope it's going to be sexy 60s. There's a lot out there I don't even know about that I want to explore. And that's what it is: I don't have the answers for the first time. I've just figured it out while you're talking to me. I don't have the answers. I don't know what's out there. And it's a little scary, and it's exciting. I think I'm on my last 30 good years and I want to make them great.

PLAYBOY: What's that going to look like?

AMANPOUR: We'll see. ■

"You need to ask yourself, Does the Clitorizer 3000 still spark joy?"

ARTWORK BY **PARTY OF ONE STUDIO**

Seizure City

Seizure City
Seizure City
Seizure City

The city of Los Angeles is cleaning house before the 2028 Olympics. Who's cashing in, and who's being swept under the rug? **J. Brian Charles** investigates L.A.'s latest transformation

The hoards of fans who once blotted out the asphalt of the Marathon Clothing store's parking lot are gone. A chain-link fence now surrounds the strip mall that was ground zero for the empire of Nipsey Hussle, the 33-year-old Los Angeles rapper who was murdered here on March 31, 2019. His death came only weeks after he and his business partners had purchased the building for $2.5 million.

On the surface, the acquisition was the latest in a series of shrewd business decisions by Hussle and his partners, another jewel in the crown for the Grammy-nominated rap star. But this was about more than business. The decision bought him time. For months, city attorney Mike Feuer had been trying to evict the Marathon Clothing store from the strip mall, which cradles the southwest corner of Crenshaw Boulevard and Slauson Avenue in the heart of South Los Angeles. The city claimed Marathon, the mall's anchor store, was a haven for members of the Crips gang.

Hussle counted himself among the Rollin' 60s Crips, whose territory covers much of the Crenshaw neighborhood. As such, he and his associates never denied the claim that members of the notorious L.A. street gang convened at the store and other adjacent businesses owned by the rapper. It was known that Hussle and his associates employed gang members in an effort to invest in both the neighborhood and its residents. These efforts won Hussle praise from celebrities including Jay-Z and Beyoncé and public officials such as Mayor Eric Garcetti and the Los Angeles Police Department's top ranks.

"He was a tireless advocate for the young people of this city and of this world," Garcetti said in a press conference following the rapper's murder, "to lift them up with the possibility of not being imprisoned by where you come from or past mistakes but the possibility of what comes in the future."

But in July 2019 *The New York Times* revealed the city had been investigating Hussle at the time of his murder. The shocking report speaks not only to contradictions in Hussle's life and death—he was allegedly killed by a man from the same gang—

Designation certain areas as **high-crime** is still an **indictment** of entire neighborhoods.

but also to the powerful forces that have shaped and continue to shape the City of Angels.

California's Interstate 10 once served as a barrier between the affluent and the working class, which is to say between white on one side and black and brown on the other. Today, with the median monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment nearly $1,400, L.A.'s young white residents are fleeing neighborhoods like West Hollywood, Santa Monica and Westwood and dipping south of the I-10, either in search of more-affordable housing or drawn to the new developments hugging the Metro, the city's quickly expanding light-rail system. At the same time, the city attorney's office has flooded property owners in South L.A. with nuisance-abatement lawsuits. Ninety-eight were filed in Feuer's first four years on the job.

The lawsuits are part of the Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program, which since 1997 has "revitalized" properties with alleged ties to criminal or gang activity. Leveraging the power of court injunctions, the program — enforced by the LAPD, the city attorney's office, the Department of Building and Safety, the Housing Department and the Planning Department — can legally force property owners to abide by new rules ranging from hiring armed security personnel to installing security cameras that face common areas or even individual apartments. Tenants are also subjected to new rules, such as registering their IDs with building security or limiting time in common areas. Violation can lead to eviction.

This is the method of policing the city was exploring in its attempt to evict the Marathon Clothing store from Crenshaw, a neighborhood that appears to be a hotbed of nuisance-abatement lawsuits due to the construction of the new Crenshaw/LAX lightrail line, which plays a central role in the Metro's expansion project. At eight and a half miles, the line will connect Los Angeles International Airport to the recently completed Exposition Line, which runs from downtown L.A. to Santa Monica beach. It's set to open in 2020.

The Marathon store is only a few hundred feet from a planned Metro stop at the intersection of Crenshaw Boulevard and Slauson Avenue. After decades of disinvestment, developers are now pouring billions of dollars into new hotels, luxury apartments and mixed-use developments. As builders hatch plans to reshape L.A., benefiting from an overcrowded city buckling in a housing crunch, the city's black and brown working-class residents find themselves in the crosshairs.

"They're taking over Crenshaw," says Zerita Jones, co-founder of the branch of the Los Angeles Tenants Union that covers Crenshaw and the adjacent neighborhoods of Baldwin Village and Leimert Park. "They are not coming in to share it with us. They are coming in to take it and move us out."

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If the smog that notoriously chokes the L.A. skyline isn't too thick, you can squint and see the Hollywood sign from Crenshaw. Just 12 miles separate the corner of Crenshaw Boulevard and Slauson Avenue from the iconic sign, but for decades they were worlds apart. The sign to the north is the beacon of a city whose most noted exports are celebrity, film and television. South of its shadow, in Crenshaw — and to a larger extent South L.A. — sits what was once an industrial hub where black and Latinx laborers churned out cars, tires and tools for the nation's war machine. These worlds have collided as L.A.'s population swells. The city has added more than 1 million residents since 1980 and is now bursting with 4 million people.

It wasn't long after Garcetti won his first mayoral election, in 2013, that he made his ambitions clear: to fix the city's transportation woes. He also wanted the Olympics to return to L.A. He tethered these goals and in 2016 convinced voters to back a half-cent sales-tax hike to fund his transit plans. "We're using the

Olympics as a rallying tool," Garcetti told *Government Technology* magazine in 2018. "By the time the world comes here, let's be the best we can. Let's get rid of homelessness on our streets, let's build out the infrastructure that we need and accelerate that, and let's leave behind a legacy: that L.A. became the healthiest city in America when it hosted the greatest sporting event in the world."

Garcetti named his plan Twenty-Eight by '28, representing the 28 transit projects that need to open before the Olympic torch is lit in summer 2028. Developers are tracing the blueprints. Where a shopping mall currently sits in South L.A., the city has approved a $700 million development that includes 961 apartments, a 400-room hotel and retail spaces. Across the street, a developer is looking to build 69 units. Another wants to build 111 more apartments down the street. All these developments are adjacent to planned stops on the Crenshaw/LAX Line. All of them will include affordable housing units—but not nearly enough to prevent displacement.

From the window of Jones's apartment on Obama Boulevard, she can see change coming. She can see the Exposition Line as it chugs west toward Santa Monica's beaches, she sees the $3.25 million investment for a new gymnasium and indoor pool at the Rancho Cienega Sports Complex and developers snatching up mom-and-pop stores every week. She can also see the demographics of her neighborhood changing.

Jones lives in Baldwin Hills' Chesapeake Apartments, where 105 buildings are spread across 17 acres. The crosscurrents of change landed at Jones's doorstep in November 2017 when the city attorney's office filed a nuisance-abatement lawsuit against the Chesapeake, claiming the property posed a threat to the public health and safety of local residents. The ensuing court order set conditions for the owner; if the owner didn't comply, the city could ask the court to close down the property, ultimately forcing a sale.

"Negligent, callous management has allowed the Chesapeake Apartments to become a hotbed of terror in this neighborhood," Feuer said in prepared remarks after filing the lawsuit. "We'll continue to hold property owners responsible for these harrowing conditions as we take back our communities."

Specifically, the 2017 lawsuit alleged that the Black P-Stones, a division of the Bloods gang, and an open drug market flourish at the Chesapeake. Residents don't dispute this. For one, the complex features a road that connects two major thoroughfares in L.A., making it prime real estate for drug dealing and, by extension, violence. To make its case that the Chesapeake is a stronghold of the Black P-Stones, the city sourced evidence on YouTube. Court documents cite a music video filmed at the Chesapeake that features aspiring rappers and alleged gang members flashing hand signs. Another music video includes scenes from a memorial for a man killed by police in a neighboring city; it shows purported Black P-Stones members brandishing handguns.

The argument that the entire complex should be deemed a gang headquarters concerns legal scholars. "The gang allegation was the most racist of the allegations," says Shayla Myers, an attorney with Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles who helped Chesapeake tenants fight the lawsuit. "The videos are an artistic expression of life in the community. To have that thrown back at them as evidence of gang activity is problematic."

In its lawsuit, the city demanded the property owner install security cameras trained on residents' entryways, the footage of which the LAPD could review without a subpoena. The city also tried to establish new "house rules" for residents, demanded that armed security guards take up posts in the complex and suggested that the owner contract a management company to help oversee the property. The injunction filed by the city asked residents to police gang activity and told the property owner to distribute rental agreements that included the new rules. Guests could spend only

limited time in common areas and were required to carry photo IDs, which had to be registered with management. If any of the house rules were violated, the property owner was expected to evict the residents.

"We were the nuisances," Jones says, "and we were the people who had to be governed and policed." Jones and her mother, Jessie Smith-Jones, intervened to fight the injunction. They claimed the terms would turn the Chesapeake into a prison. The armed security guards would only add guns to a place already marked by violence. The security cameras criminalized all residents, including the innocent. Residents acknowledged the presence of gangs in the complex, but policing was the LAPD's responsibility, tenants argued, not theirs.

The city walked back some of the conditions. Today, the security guards in the complex are unarmed and the cameras record only common areas. But residents are still being pushed out. As head of the Chesapeake's tenant association, Jones is often the first person those facing eviction call. Some fight; some don't. When they leave, the apartments are renovated and rented at market rate.

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Mike Feuer rode into the city attorney's office in the same 2013 election that vaulted Garcetti, a former city councilman, to power. Feuer's office didn't respond to requests for comment for this story, but scrolling through its website, you get the impression Feuer wants to align with a new era of progressive prosecutors. His office champions alternatives to imprisonment for teens in street gangs, diversion programs for nonviolent offenders and pop-up legal clinics for the homeless. These programs are part of L.A.'s Community Justice Initiative, or CJI — a name that suggests a softer approach to crime. In language posted online, CJI is "a neighborhood-focused array of restorative justice, alternative sentencing and diversionary programs." Nuisance-abatement lawsuits are categorized within CJI as "administrative citation enforcement."

In his first term, Feuer appeared to have borrowed heavily from two of his predecessors: James K. Hahn, who was city attorney for 16 years before becoming L.A.'s 40th mayor in 2001, and Rocky Delgadillo, who succeeded Hahn as city attorney and served from 2001 to 2009. In 1989 Hahn laid out plans to use the city attorney's office to tackle L.A.'s gang problem. He wanted to implement the criminological theory known as "broken windows." A social science term coined in 1982, it gained traction among law enforcement in the 1990s but has since been discredited. The idea is to snuff out minor infractions such as loitering and drinking on the sidewalk with the goal of not just rounding up small-time offenders before they commit major crimes (a theoretical certainty) but signaling to the community that cops won't tolerate infractions of any kind.

Where Hahn's tactics differed was his idea to use civil courts via nuisance lawsuits rather than criminal courts as a hammer against crime. The city would move for an injunction to bar alleged gang members from congregating in areas covered by the injunction. This criminalized innocuous gatherings such as family cookouts should two alleged gang members be there.

Those facing civil injunctions have no right to an attorney. Rather than proving cases beyond a reasonable doubt, city attorneys have to prove only that the majority of evidence supports their claims. Once the injunction is in place, those who violate it may later face criminal charges.

Delgadillo's pursuit of street crime differed in that his office

targeted homes, businesses and properties. Those plans landed heavily on downtown L.A.'s homeless population. Meanwhile, cops got tougher on the streets. William Bratton, another supporter of broken-windows policing, became LAPD police chief in 2002. He launched the Safer Cities Initiative, which flooded downtown L.A. with an additional 50 cops on patrol. This was classic broken windows. Cops handed out 12,000 fines for small offenses in the first year; a 2011 survey by the Los Angeles Community Action Network found that more than half the people living in the Skid Row area had been arrested in the past year.

Upon taking office, Feuer moved forward with an injunction his predecessor had filed against people with alleged gang ties in Echo Park, a gentrified Latinx neighborhood on L.A.'s east side. In June 2013 the city attorney's office filed a permanent injunction against known members of six gangs. But the effort faced blowback from activists and civil rights attorneys. Chief U.S. District Judge Virginia A. Phillips ruled in 2018 that the injunction violated the due process rights of thousands and compelled the city to toss the remaining 1,400 names off the injunction list. (According to the *Los Angeles Times*, almost 9,000 people had faced injunction enforcement since 2000.)

By that time, Feuer's strategy had shifted from targeting alleged gang members to targeting property associated with gang activity. "When we even think about the Citywide Nuisance Abatement Program, it's a lawsuit against the property," says Jamie Garcia, an organizer with the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition. "That's how the city takes its hands off, i.e., 'We are not targeting people.' When you hear LAPD's rhetoric, they go after location-based policing." It's a distinction without a difference, Garcia argues. Targeting land, designating certain areas as high-crime and filing property nuisance suits are still indictments of entire neighborhoods.

The city's practices are buttressed by state law. Shortly after Feuer took office, Governor Jerry Brown signed two laws that expanded the power of cities to evict tenants for certain nuisance violations, including one that allows a city to evict a tenant based on an arrest report, even if the person wasn't convicted. The legislation was backed by the California Apartment Association.

When you couple Feuer's use of civil actions with LAPD's policing tactics, the city has powerful tools to remove people from within its borders. Until April 2019 one such tool was the Los Angeles Strategic Extraction and Restoration program, or LASER, which the LAPD phased out after eight years. LASER focused on identifying and monitoring chronic offenders. To get off the list, a person had to avoid police contact, which is difficult because LASER increases policing in so-called anchor points— locations where several people on the list live, work or socialize. It's the same type of regulation used against the Chesapeake. "It became very clear it was about land and displacement," Garcia says.

Garcia's colleague, Hamid Khan, founder of Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, elaborates: "Such practices are a continuation of policy over time," he says. "Broken windows may be discredited, but it serves as a template for what's happening now."

Fragments of broken windows pop up in other cities too. The department of Justice found that Ferguson, Missouri, where a cop killed teenager Michael Brown in 2014, collected more than $2.4 million in fines in 2013, largely tied to minor infractions such as parking and housing-code violations. The city issued more than 9,000 arrest warrants for unresolved fines in 2013 alone.

Former South Bend mayor and presidential hopeful Pete Buttigieg, an alumnus of consulting firm McKinsey & Company, has been criticized for his 1,000 Houses in 1,000 Days program, which forced the rehab or demolition of more than 1,000 homes in the city. The city dispatched code-enforcement officers, and the amount of fines jumped 25 percent, with more than $500,000 collected in a single year.

The program hit black and Latinx residents hard. Many came to own their homes through inheritance or investing in low-income neighborhoods. Some had been trapped in zombie mortgages. When the city assessed fines, some residents walked away.

South Bend, where about 45 percent of residents are in minority groups, has one of the highest eviction rates in the country. The city has yet to study the impact of the program on black, Latinx or low-income communities, but Buttigieg, in his political memoir, Shortest Way Home: One Mayor's Challenge and a Model for America's Future, writes that "the most important impact of the effort was unquantifiable. Hitting such an ambitious
goal made it easier for residents to believe we could do very difficult things as a city, at a time when civic confidence had been in short supply for decades."

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Hussle's voice booms from cars stopped at Crenshaw and Slauson. His face is on T-shirts worn by the men and boys walking the streets. On another corner, his face stares at traffic from a mural on the wall of a bank. In the global rap world, Kendrick Lamar may be king of L.A., but even in death, Hussle rules over Crenshaw.

The Marathon store was the face card in a broader business plan, which now includes a co-working space, a business incubator and a STEM lab. "If [South L.A.] is to ever be in the condition it deserves... if our people are to ever be treated the way they deserve to be treated... we have to own and build it for ourselves," said Marqueece Harris-Dawson, who represents Crenshaw on the Los Angeles City Council, after Hussle's death.

Hussle's business partner, David Gross, declined to be interviewed for this story, but he has publicized his fight against the city on social media. His plans for the Marathon Clothing store location, a mixed-use project called Nipsey Hussle Tower. This permanent memorial will serve as both a tribute to the neighborhood and a send-up of outside forces vying for control. Those forces may prevail, Jones says, "but the question is, are we going to allow it to happen, or are we going to fight?"

As Hussle would say, "The marathon continues." ■

ENTICING
Victoria
Kozakova
Model @victoria.kozakova
Photography by @mordererstudio
Makeup & Hair @mborshcevska

Introducing Victoria Kozakova, our Model of the Month, who brings an enchanting blend of elegance and allure to Playboy Australia. This international sensation has captivated the global fashion world with her striking features and a beauty philosophy that champions naturalness and high authenticity. In this stunning photoshoot, inspired by a Tony Kelly vision, Victoria embodies the spirit of modern femininity. Set against a backdrop of bold, trendy colors, she effortlessly commands attention, whether nestled in the luxurious curves of a red car or savoring a moment inside a glass of martini. Each frame captures her essence as a symbol of understated glamour, showcasing an elegant approach that highlights her natural beauty.

Victoria's artistry lies in her ability to enhance rather than mask her features. With a delicate touch of makeup that allows her skin to glow and her eyes to shine, she proves that true sophistication is found in naturalness. Her beauty routine is a celebration of freshness, focusing on hydration and skin health, making her the epitome of a refined, modern woman.

Join us as we unveil this breathtaking preview featuring Victoria Kozakova, a radiant muse who invites you to embrace your own unique beauty and redefine elegance in every moment.

The Good Witch

With the release of a scorching new book and the return of her hit show, writer **Lindy West** finds herself at a crossroads — what happens when you don't have to be shrill anymore?

BY **ERIC SPITZNAGEL**

Lindy West is sitting in a director's chair — so big, she says, it's "almost a hammock" — in a Portland, Oregon warehouse filled with cameras and an inordinate number of crew members with handlebar mustaches. As she glances up at the monitors, watching actors repeat lines she helped write, she reflects on her hypothetical death.

"I was exhausted, but I felt proud of myself," she says of a recent six-mile mountain hike across often treacherous terrain. As she was traversing a high, narrow trail, she crossed paths with three other hikers, all young and fit.

"I had this realization that if one of them accidentally bumped me off the trail and I tumbled down this ravine, and if someone caught it on video, people would think it was funny," she says. "It wouldn't be 'Woman Tragically Plummets to Her Death.' It would be 'Look at the Fatty Roll.' "

It's hard to know whether to laugh or nod grimly when West shares stories like this. The 37-year-old writer and producer has made a career of this balancing act, pointing out injustice while also being one of the most uproarious social critics of her generation.

Dressed in a Queen T-shirt knotted at the belly and a form-fitting leopardskin skirt, West exudes fabulousness with just a hint of *I'm not entirely sure about this*. She's also exhausted. They're in the final weeks of shooting the second season of *Shrill*, a series inspired by her best-selling essay collection of the same name. (The show returns to Hulu in January.) The first season was beloved by both critics and viewers, and the show was promptly renewed. The pressure is on to keep the bar high.

"It feels like a lot more responsibility," she says, keeping an eye on a scene in which Aidy Bryant, the *Saturday Night Live* regular and *Shrill*'s lead, gets into a heated exchange with her fictional boyfriend. "I'm glad I wasn't given this kind of long leash when I was 23. I probably would've made something really bad."

Over the course of the day, West mentions several times that for most of her career it was just her on a couch, wrestling words out of her head in an otherwise empty apartment. Now she's sitting in a crowded soundstage where "there are always a million moving parts and a million things to do. Sometimes it's a last-minute *zhuzhing* of the script, and sometimes it's the props department needing me to sign off on some tiny detail that viewers probably won't even notice."

Shrill the TV show follows Annie Easton, a character loosely based on West. While the similarities between the two are hard to miss — both Easton and West are writers living in the Pacific Northwest who champion fat-positivity and get hounded by trolls, oblivious passersby and many others — the fictional counterpart has a long way to go before she reaches present-day Lindy-ness.

"She doesn't seem like a character who'd be like, 'Yes, I'm a witch and I'm hunting you,' " West says, referring to her recent book of essays, *The Witches Are*

ILLUSTRATION BY **EWELINA DYMEK**

of the
Northwest

Coming (The title is from her 2017 *New York Times* op-ed about #MeToo blowback and men bemoaning "witch hunts" despite "millenniums of treating women like prey.") Of the character's development she adds, "I think we're going to move in that direction slowly. It's her journey toward becoming Shrill, or learning how to own that."

West is long past learning how to embrace her inner shrill. She practically owns the word now. She built a career as an outsider critic and satirist of misogynist culture, but she's no longer an outsider; she's a best-selling author and a writer and executive producer on a hugely successful TV show.

> "I'LL WATCH A *scene* AND BE LIKE, 'AW, AIDY IS THE *prettiest* LEADING LADY I EVER SAW.' "

The subtitle for her first book is Notes *From a Loud Woman*. But she doesn't need to be loud anymore. Everyone is listening.

Which isn't to say she *shouldn't* be loud. The rules change, however, when the world has stopped shushing you, when outlets like *The Guardian* and *The New York Times* are lining up to offer you regular columns and Elizabeth Banks wants to produce a TV show with you. Being loud is a weapon of the ignored and disenfranchised (and, of course, of angry mobs with digital pitchforks), not so much somebody who has the spotlight and a captive audience.

"I was so desperate to make people laugh," West says of her younger self. "I was afraid to be sincere, because it's vulnerable."

It makes you wonder what, if anything, she's scared of now.

• • •

"You think?"

West wrinkles her nose, not sure if she wants to take a compliment. We're in Portland's Pearl District, on a break from the *Shrill* shoot, and talking about her new book — in particular her essay about the late comedian Joan Rivers that I keep insisting is brilliant. West isn't so sure.

"I was worried it was dumb," she says. "I was worried that I was unfairly picking on her."

I contend that it's a careful meditation on a woman largely considered a pioneer in comedy. Uncertainty looms over every sentence as West contemplates an icon stuck in a rigged system. "Instead of fighting for us lost, lost girls," she writes, "she turned around and gave worse than she got."

It's a far cry from the West of a decade ago. In 2010, when she was a relative unknown writing for the Seattle alt-weekly *The Stranger*, her caustic reviews of movies such as *Sex and the City 2* went viral thanks to snarky but hilarious observations like "What is the lubrication level of Samantha Jones's 52-yearold vagina?"

West can barely stand to reflect on that early incarnation. "I didn't know anything," she says. "I just wanted to be funny. And I was so mean. Some of the stuff that I wrote about people's work, I would die. I would die if someone wrote that about me."

She settled into a more confident voice at the self-proclaimed "supposedly feminist website" Jezebel in 2012, where she wrote some of her most challenging and controversial essays on sexism, bigotry and body shaming. She could still be ruthlessly funny, but the stakes were higher, and she was learning how to be more nuanced.

"So much of Lindy's writing revolves around issues that aren't black or white," says Jessica Coen, editor in chief at Jezebel during West's tenure. "They can't be distilled down to a single hot take." Many of the topics she writes about (abortion, fat-phobia) don't seem like they'd be entertaining, Coen says, but West always pulls it off because "she writes with so much energy and wit, so while the topic itself might not be a delight, reading her always is."

Comedian Patti Harrison, who has a recurring role on *Shrill*, was affected by West long before she joined the cast. She recalls watching West debate the topic of rape jokes with comedian Jim Norton on *Totally Biased* in 2013. West argued that "you don't get to say that comedy is this sacred, powerful, vital thing that we have to protect because it's speaking truth to power blah, blah, blah, and then also be like, 'Well, it's just a joke. I mean, language doesn't affect our lives at all, so shut up!' " For Harrison, it had a seismic effect on how she approached comedy.

"I was doing improv in college at the time, and I believed nothing should be off limits," she says. "But Lindy was so funny and so smart. I wanted to be provocative, and I thought you should be able to say anything, but she shifted my thinking."

When Shrill became a TV show, West was given a chance to shift people's thinking on a larger scale. She went from commenting on pop culture to being a part of pop culture. But is *Shrill* changing minds en masse? Or is it just a dot on a TV landscape that idealizes tiny bodies and isn't about to change because of one norm-busting heroine?

Martha Plimpton, who became friends with West long before she co-founded the #ShoutYourAbortion social media campaign in 2015 with fellow Seattleite Amelia Bonow, says she understands the tug-of-war between idealism and making a commercial product.

"You can't overhaul the whole fucking system by sheer will alone," she says. "I'm still figuring it out myself. There are

parameters that've been set up that you have absolutely zero power to change. You want your producing and activist sides to intersect as much as possible, but you also can't torture yourself over what you can't do."

West, however, is optimistic that *Shrill* can make an impact. "I can feel it affecting me, and I made it," she says. "I'll watch a scene and be like, 'Aw, Aidy is the prettiest leading lady I ever saw.' I'm not like, 'Who is this fat woman?' Once you start normalizing it in your brain, I think the process happens really fast."

By way of comparison, she recalls a cultural norm whose evolution she witnessed in her early 20s. "The thing that keeps me going, and I don't know why I always return to this when I'm feeling stressed, is the smoking ban," she says. "It seemed unfathomable that you could get people to stop smoking. But then they made a rule, and now it's unfathomable that bars ever allowed smoking. You can create a new normal, and people who are otherwise resistant will get used to it. You forget what life was like before, you know?"

• • •

West still gets hate mail. Just the other day, she tells me over dinner, she received a message from a man who wrote, "You're stupid and I heard you wrote a stupid book and I hope it tanks."

But long gone are the days when she would get daily death and rape threats. It's no coincidence that she left Twitter in January 2017.

West insists it wasn't the trolls alone that drove her off the platform, but she's glad that dealing with them is no longer a central part of her job description.

"Why are you entitled to engage with me?" she says of the armies of men who insisted on attacking her — usually anonymously — online. "This is the stuff that started to drive me crazy." Every time she hit back at the barrage of toxic masculinity, it felt "bad for my mental health," she says. "I already feel like I have psychological effects from that time of my life when I had to seem impervious to pain. It's not good for you." And, she adds, "it's not good for your brain to be numb to that."

Eventually West let go—not just of Twitter but of the idea that trolls can be reasoned with, or that there's value in proving how much abuse you can endure. Through the Twitter breach, she emerged as a woman who's more focused, more equipped to fuck up the patriarchy. "Hopefully it's a little bit of a rallying cry," she says of the "witches" title of her new book.

Her next thought reminds me that, earlier that day, we had spoken of the fears that plagued her as an emerging writer.

"There's power in this label that people are putting on you, and we can assume that power," she says. "They're scared of us."

• • •

West is vague when discussing what's next for her. More books are likely, and she'll stay with Shrill for as long as there's an audience. But she has ambitions that are less about the next career move than, say, exploration.

"I've always had the unspoken thought in my head that I can't go to Japan because I'm too fat," she says. "I'd just Godzilla the whole place, knock everything over and break all the chairs. But that's crazy. It's a regular-size country."

She'd also like to try downhill skiing or scuba diving, two things that terrify her. But her real dream —

"Here," she says, pulling out her phone. "I'll show you."

As she scrolls through Instagram, she tells me about her friend Jenny, who has recently taken up horseback riding. "Jenny told me to follow this Instagram page called African Horse Safaris. It's a real service, and you're basically on a horse that's galloping across the savanna."

She hands me her phone and points to a video. A saddle-cam captures a horseback rider chasing a tower of giraffes somewhere in Tanzania.

"Are you kidding me?" she says, laughing. "That's not CGI, that's real!"

Does she actually want to go to Africa and ride horses amid the roaring wildlife? "I don't know. But it's made me wonder. Is there a reason I *couldn't* do it? I'd have to learn how to ride a horse. It'd have to be a big horse. But horses are strong, whatever."

She keeps flipping through photos and videos. "I'm sure it's probably scary. But maybe that's why I need to do it."

In a weird way, it seems like the perfect next adventure for Lindy West. This is a woman whose entire life has been about doing things that are scary and that the rest of the world told her she couldn't or shouldn't be doing. Is there any difference between shouting about your abortion or feeling proud of your body or pushing back against rape humor and riding a horse at top speed across an African savanna?

West smiles, still transfixed by the images of galloping horses on her phone. "I guess we'll find out." ■

HE RIT AG E

ANNE MARIE FOX

Diamond Days

Previous page: *The first Playboy Club opened in Chicago in 1960, introducing to the world the boldness of the Bunny.* ***This page:*** *Budapest-born Marika Lukacs at the Chicago club.* ***Opposite page:*** *Announcing the musical entertainment at the Detroit club, which opened in December 1963.*

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the iconic Playboy Bunny, we asked more than a dozen Bunnies—and one Rabbit—to take a hop with us down memory lane

On February 29, 1960 the first Playboy Club opened its doors, and into pop culture bounded the Bunny. With her satin ears, sheer stockings, boned corset and white tail (the cuffs and collars came later), she has resided in our collective imagination ever since. Like the indelible Playboy Rabbit Head, the Bunny symbolizes the ideal of sophisticated pleasure. But unlike the inanimate logo, the Bunnies had the hard work of actually bringing that ideal to life

It was a good job if you could get it. Hundreds of Bunny hopefuls typically applied at each new club, some company-owned and others franchise-operated. Bunnies could be found working in 25 states and seven countries and, after Playboy's private DC-9 airplane took off in the early 1970s, in the sky as well From Jamaica to New Jersey, London to Lansing and Omaha to Osaka, the Playboy hotels, casinos and resorts offered endless amenities and activities — horseback riding, scuba diving, skeet shooting, skiing, roulette. The bushy-tailed Bunny was the ever-present standard bearer (and still is: Visit our Playboy Club in London)

Bunny training was rigorous, and standards were high. The so-called Bunny Mothers were managers who enforced rules laid out in the intimidatingly thick Bunny Manual, but for the Bunnies, tips and other perks including tuition assistance and appearance fees made the difficult job worthwhile. In the early 1980s, for example, Bunnies hired to appear at events approved by Playboy earned $17 50 an hour more than five times the minimum wage

The clubs were showplaces for comedians, jazz musicians and other performers, but it was the Bunnies, with their practiced-to-perfection perch, stance and dip, who were the steady draw. For a short while in the mid-1980s, Rabbits – male servers who were Bunny counterparts had their time in the New York hutch; more than 1,500 men applied for 25 positions.

It would be a mistake to look at the Bunny and see only a waitress; she was so much more. When the Bunny first arrived on the scene 60 years ago, the world was still adjusting to the idea of women who unapologetically owned their attractiveness or leveraged it as part of their job. Criticism came from various corners, including undercover Bunny Gloria Steinem's two-part 1963 story in Show magazine. But where some saw sexism, most Bunnies saw opportunity. (As one told The New York Times in 1976, "We're exploiting men, they're not exploiting us After all, those poor slobs just want to come in here and see us.") Many former Bunnies credit their time working at the clubs as formative to the women they became.

"I really owe my Ph D. my first one to Hugh Hefner and Playboy," says Elisabeth Clark, a psychologist and psychoanalyst who was known in the original New York club as Bunny Dana. "Playboy paid for two college courses every semester. My graduate-level classes at New York University were in the daytime, and I could still work at night. It was perfect."

Then as now, it took guts and grit to be a Bunny.

On the occasion of the Bunny's diamond anniversary, we reached out to 17 former Bunnies and one Rabbit — among their ranks a doctor, two rock singers, a film editor, an attorney and a social worker and asked them about their time wearing the ears. Read on for their memories.

BUILDING CHARACTER— AND BANK ACCOUNTS

Offering excellent pay, flexible hours and tuition aid, working as a Bunny was often seen as the best gig in town

Gloria Hendry, New York club, 1965–1972 *(actor, singer, model, legal secretary)*: I became a Bunny because of the money. Sometimes I made up to $2,000 a week. I was dabbling in acting, and I could never have afforded classes if I hadn't been a Bunny. Thanks to the hours, I was able to go out on auditions, and I got my first Screen Actors Guild movie role, in *For Love of Ivy*, with Sidney Poitier and Abbey Lincoln

Sabrina Scharf Schiller, New York and Bahamas clubs, 1962–1963 *(attorney)*: I thought if I worked very hard and saved diligently, it would give me the serious start I needed for my education. And that's exactly what happened. I

There was a total shift in social mores, and Bunnies were on the front lines of that change.

worked the first 60 days for the club without a day off, in three inch heels, often doing double shifts. With tips, I was taking home the unheard-of amount of $100 per day. Mid-level career men weren't earning that much then, let alone young women.

Marilyn Cole, London club, 1971–1974 *(journalist, 1973 Playmate of the Year)*: Playboy made us financially independent, a rare thing for 21-year-old girls. We could travel, buy our own cocktails and the latest fashions … even have mortgages and build our own lives. That was powerful.

Kathryn Leigh Scott, New York club, 1963–1966 *(actor, author – we're partial to her 1998 book, The Bunny Years)*: I was a scholarship student at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, working at Bloomingdale's part time, when I saw the ad: "Girls, step into the spotlight, become a Playboy Bunny!" It sounded like fun, glamor, good pay and perfect hours for my class schedule. Lauren Hutton and I met in the long line to audition, and Keith Hefner hired both of us.

Debbie Harry, New York club, 1968 *(lead singer and songwriter for Blondie)*: It's not a job or career choice for everyone, however, it was a good education for me, and the Playboy clubs always had a high regard for the women who worked there. Being a Bunny was the right decision for me, as I have always liked the naughty and nice sides of a story.

AT THE VANGUARD

As the sexual revolution got under way in the 1960s, influenced in no small part by playboy, other social changes were transforming the cultural landscape.

Sabrina Scharf Schiller: Women's lives were changing drastically. The advent of the pill brought about more control over our bodies and our choices. There was a total shift in social mores, and Bunnies were on the front lines of that change. We were the innocent representation of the concept that sex is fun. Only the appearance was naughty.

Angelyn Chester, Chicago club, 1972–1984 *(journalist, 1974 International Bunny of the Year)*: The very first woman who won International Bunny of the Year, Gina Byrams, was a woman of color. You have to remember the times; race relations were strained. In 1974 I won my local Bunny competition, and some people said, "Just go to L.A. and have a good time. They're not going to pick a woman of color after another woman of color." I didn't believe that. I thought I had just as good a chance as anybody. And I went on to win.

Jennifer Jackson, Chicago club, 1964 *(social worker, March 1965 Playmate)*: The 1960s were an amazing period, you know? The Black Movement, Vietnam, the hippies, the Beatles, Motown. There hasn't been a more exciting time since.

Francesca Emerson, New York and Los Angeles clubs, 1963–1968 *(film editor)*: The Playboy Club was known for hiring minorities even in the early 1960s, when some places were still segregated. I was a black unmarried mother living in New York City, and Playboy gave me confidence, independence, financial security, adventure and opportunities that would never have come to me had I still been working the counters at Bloomingdale's or serving coffee and donuts in some uptown takeout joint.

Gloria Hendry: The club was wonderful. If somebody grabbed my tail or said something derogatory to me, like "I don't want that black Bunny waiting on me," the room director would walk over and say, "May I have your Playboy key, please? Now get out and never come back." What can I say? They protected us, they took care of us, and that's my experience.

GETTING THE GIG

Every Bunny – or Rabbit … forged their own path to the Playboy Club.

Gwen Wong Wayne, Los Angeles club and Big Bunny airplane, 1965–1975 *(interior designer, April 1967 Playmate)*: My aunt was a Bunny in Miami and New York, and she had some great stories to tell; I think she was the catalyst for my career with Playboy. I showed some pictures to Keith Hefner, and he immediately asked if I could work at the Miami club. I couldn't leave my two children, but Keith promised that when the L.A. club opened I would be one of the first to get a Bunny suit. When the club was interviewing hundreds of girls, I thought Keith had probably forgotten me. He had not. He was a man of his word, and I was in … yeah! Later I became a Jet Bunny on Playboy's plane.

Connie Mason Kasten, Miami and Chicago clubs, 1961–1962 *(actor, June 1963 Playmate)*

Right. *Jet Bunnies take time off from their flight attendant duties on the Big Bunny to enjoy the sights in Venice Italy in 1970.* ***Below:*** *Front Desk Bunnies at the Detroit club update the welcome board*

It was a much coveted job, like being chosen to be in the Miss America pageant. Tony Roma had suggested to my dad that I apply since the Bunnies made such good tips. During my Bunny-hopping years I gained tremendous self-confidence, and I was able to support my two little ones as a single mother.

Jeff Rector, New York Empire Club, 1985–1986 *(actor, writer):* When word went out that Playboy was looking for waiters, every Chippendale thought he would get the job. But Playboy didn't want a bunch of beefcakes who just strolled around looking pretty. You had to do your job and do it well. It's the only job I've ever had where I couldn't wait to go to work.

Dale Bozzio, Boston club, 1973–1976 *(musician, lead singer for Missing Persons):* I was 18 years old when I became a Playboy Bunny in Boston. Out of 250 girls, they hired four, and I was one of them. Training lasted weeks. I learned how to use my beauty in a kind, precious manner. I became the best Bunny I possibly could.

BARRACUDAS AND TOUGH MOTHERS

The Bunny gig came with some exacting standards (sometimes too exacting) and demanding tasks

Angelyn Chester: It was not a hairnet type of job. We had weeks of grueling training. You had to learn how to high-carry a tray with two heavy telephone books and how to carry the tray at your waist. You had to be strong to high-carry, to walk in those heels, to serve. And you had to be fast. Once I got my tray, it was like a badge of honor. You got your tray, your flashlight and your name tag. It was like a flight attendant getting her wings.

Pat Lacey, Los Angeles and Jamaica clubs and Big Bunny, 1965–1978 *(Playboy Promotions specialist, writer)* We did a weigh-in every month, you had to stay within five pounds of your original weight. Being a Bunny was a workout: You developed strong arms from all the lifting and Bunny-dipping. The night manager called us experienced Bunnies barracudas because you had to be tough to make it. When I was a Bunny Mother and we needed five girls, we'd get 10 to start. Not all of them would make it. Girls would get demerits for lateness, for shoes that weren't polished. But they were smart and knew how to get by my inspections.

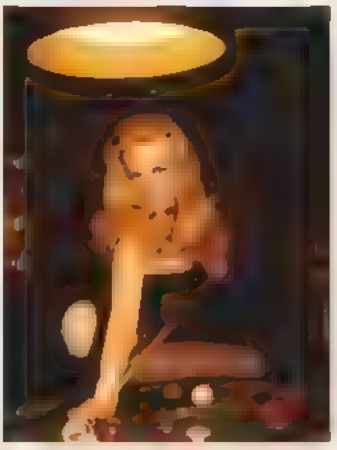
Sabrina Scharf Schiller: I did not like the weekly weigh-in to ensure a trim Bunny figure was kept under control. Those costumes were tight, and we knew when we'd had one dessert too many.

IN THE WARREN

Myriad positions were available at the clubs Door Bunnies, Floor Bunnies, Pool Bunnies, Cabaret Bunnies and more

Sharron Long, Kansas City and Jamaica clubs, 1966–1968 *(businesswoman)* I took over the pool table shortly after starting. It was perfect for me. I loved it, and it taught me a lot about being an entrepreneur, though I wasn't aware of it at the time. I learned how to take chances, how to trust my judgment and, most important, how to step out of the mold that had been created for women at that time.

Joyce Nizzari, Chicago, Miami and New Orleans clubs, 1960 *(Playboy Mansion executive assistant, December 1958 Playmate)* I worked at the original Chicago club during the first week it opened as a Door Bunny, checking key numbers. I wore the Bunny



Our Strong Suit

Recognized the world over, the Bunny costume may be the most famous uniform ever created

Like many aspects of Playboy history, the Bunny suit owes much of its success to women—and not just those who wear it.

Founder Hugh Hefner originally wanted silky negligees as the club uniform but was talked out of the impractical idea by Victor Lownes, the promotions manager who was instrumental in the development of the clubs. Instead Lownes brought Hef a better idea—one Lownes got from his girlfriend, actress Ilse Taurins (whose name is spelled variously as Ilze and Ilse). As former Bunny Kathryn Leigh Scott reports in *The Bunny Years*, Taurins suggested the costume be rabbit-based, a play on the magazine's emblem. Although Hefner had already considered and spurned the idea as too masculine, Taurins created a one-piece design with an attached tail and separate ears, according to Scott. Taurins's seamstress mother then assembled the prototype, which Lownes showed to Hef. The costume wasn't quite daring enough for Hefner's vision, but with minor alterations it formed the basis for the world-famous outfit that debuted at the Chicago Playboy Club in 1960.

Quality of craftsmanship in addition to the right sexy fashion surely also helped the costume's legacy. According to New York University director of costume studies Nancy Deihl, the clubs commissioned talented women to custom-build the suits, including Zelda Wynn Valdes, who fabricated them for the New York club that opened in December 1962.

"The Bunny costume has withstood the test of time because of its simplicity," says Kristi Beck, a Playboy

costume with no collar or cuffs because they hadn't been added to the uniform yet. The lines to get in were so long that the doors were almost never fully closed; I remember getting snow on my costume

Gloria Hendry: I wound up starting as a Cigarette Bunny, saying, "Cigars, cigarettes, Tiparillos, Playboy lighters? One dollar and five cents." I'll never forget those lines. And men used to come by and give me a $100 or $50 tip.

Pat Lacey: After six weeks of training in Indiana in an enormous hangar, and in Florida for water-evacuation training, and in Wisconsin at the Lake Geneva club, where the Playboy chef taught us how to prepare gourmet meals, I became a Jet Bunny. Normally a flight would have just one preflight FAA inspector. But on the *Big Bunny* there were always multiple inspectors — they wanted to see Hef's plane and the Jet Bunnies!

Carol Cleveland, London club, 1966 *(comedian, writer and Monty Python cast member):* I started off in the Cabaret Room. Once I took people's orders and the show started, I could watch the cabaret. Dave Allen was a well-known comedian here in England, and he was the star when I first started. I was a great fan and happy as could be watching him perform every night.

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE DRESSING ROOM

Co-workers became friends who became family within the special society of Bunnydom

Marilyn Cole: The Bunny room was the most liberating place — there was swearing, nudity, camaraderie and pluralism. I learned about politics, social justice and religious diversity. A Bunny roommate had been born in Aden as a Zoroastrian; she called it the oldest religion in the world. She would burn incense and pray every night, even wear a religious garment around her waist underneath her Bunny costume.

Kathryn Leigh Scott: I was a farm kid from the Midwest mixing with 110 other young women in every size and shape, from every religious, ethnic, cultural, economic and racial background, from all over the world. The Bunny dressing room circa 1963 was more diverse than a college campus even 20 years later. A single mother from a Harlem project donned the same jewel-colored costume as an heiress, an East German refugee who'd escaped the Berlin Wall, the daughter of a Chinese diplomat, a gap-toothed tomboy who became a supermodel. I interviewed them all for *The Bunny Years*.

Candace Collins Jordan, St. Louis and Chicago clubs, 1973–1977 *(columnist, December*

Opposite page, top left and right: *Each Bunny's garment is custom-fit to her needs by an experienced seamstress.* ***Opposite page, lower left.*** *Scottie Scott of the New Orleans club works as a Pool Bunny.* ***Below.*** *Cynthia Maddox models an early collarless, cuffless version of the Bunny suit, (architectural model of the Chicago club in the background)*

manor manager and [illegible] group responsible for overseeing Bunny selection and training.

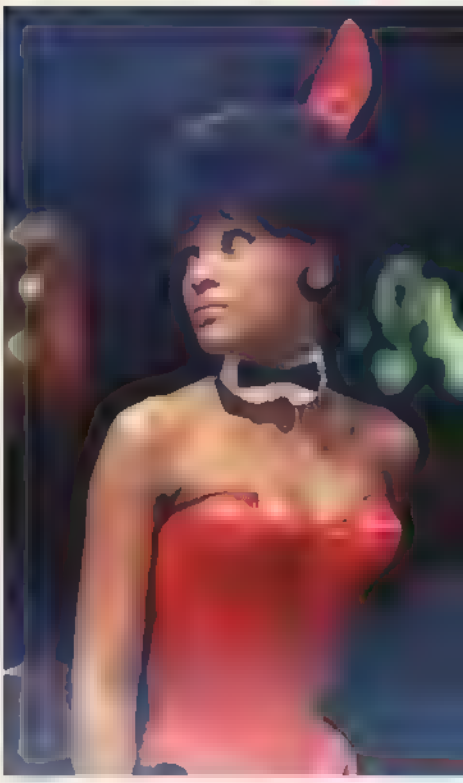
Small changes to the hare-raising getup have been made over the decades: the addition of the tuxedo collar and cuffs and a name-tag rosette, a tweak to the high-cut leg, a slight redesign of the ears, more accommodating cup sizes — but the Bunny remains as recognizable as ever.

By the time the suit turned 20, various versions were in use alongside the solid-color satin classic: suits with psychedelic patterns inspired by Emilio Pucci, a VIP suit in velvet, a lacy (and short-lived) cabaret version and a fur-trimmed green or red Christmas look. And not all Bunnies wore the famous suit; season, location and responsibility also dictated their attire, with noncorset-based outfits for Ski Bunnies, Croupier Bunnies, Beach Bunnies and others.

Today, Playboy Club [illegible] suits that [illegible] updated in 2005 with accessories by designer Roberto Cavalli. In 2018 Bunnies at the Coachella music fest wore a new green-leaf-patterned suit, but the original 1960 silhouette remains intact.

Since its appearance six decades ago, the Bunny has woven its way into the fabric of American culture, donned by everyone from Dolly Parton to Flip Wilson to Kate Moss. It was the first service uniform ever registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and a complete Bunny costume can be found in the collection of the Smithsonian. Like other cultural mainstays, how it's seen often depends on who's looking at it, including the Bunnies themselves.

"Bunnies like wearing it for different reasons," says Beck, who sometimes fits new Bunnies into their suits. "Some see it as playful and nostalgic; others see it as badass empowerment. We don't need to define it for them."



Opposite page: *At Playboy's Lake Geneva resort guests could partake in various seasonal activities from skiing to swimming to horseback riding, with friendly assistance from Bunnies (Playmate and Bunny Gwen Wong Wayne at far right)* ***Right:*** *Sandy Lawrence at the New York club circa 1963*

1979 Playmate). The Bunnies were the sisters I never had. It was a unique sorority and a joy for me.

Francesca Emerson: We bonded like glue. Playboy was like a gigantic family of different people of different backgrounds and different cultures, all working hard to improve themselves. When we weren't working, we'd meet at each other's houses and have lunches and dinners together, participate in each other's kids' birthday parties, even take vacations together. Half a century later, I still have close friendships from the New York and L.A. clubs.

MISCONCEPTIONS

Donning the ears could come with some baggage

Marilyn Cole: I am shocked that I still sometimes have to defend myself for having been a Bunny and a Playmate. It was a woman who interviewed me. It was a woman who trained me. It was a woman who did PR at the club. playboy magazine's photo editor was a woman. The first woman gaming inspector in the U.K. casino industry had been a Playboy Croupier Bunny. I wish people knew that. Who would have thought we would have such an impact on social history? The Bunnies were pioneers. We stood for freedom.

Candace Collins Jordan: I wish people understood what a wonderful opportunity this was for women like me instead of thinking we were exploited. It was our choice to be Bunnies. We made great money and great friends and had wonderful opportunities that are now lasting memories. It was a priceless and life-changing experience for me and made me who I am today.

Jennifer Jackson: In the 1960s and 1970s, no one thought black people were pretty. And then people saw me as a black woman, and that black is beautiful, in all different shades. That was one of the things that we promoted.

Kathryn Leigh Scott: Former Bunnies include entrepreneurs, lawyers, judges, CEOs, professors, architects, restaurateurs, scientists and a few actors and writers — none of us turning in our satin ears to collect Social Security!

Angelyn Chester: Hefner sent a memo to corporate explaining that if it were not for the women, the Playmates and the Bunnies in particular, that the company would not exist, so they are to be respected and not harassed. He was ahead of his time when it came to policies like that.

GOOD TIMES , GREAT MEMORIES

From celebrity customers to softball stardom, the Bunnies and Rabbits led unforgettable lives

Pat Lacey: In Jamaica they had goat racing on the beach for guests to watch. Guys would climb the trees and grab fresh coconuts right off the palms. During the day, before six p.m., we wore a two-piece bikini, ears and tail, with flip-flops, and in the evenings the standard Bunny costume. I overstayed my visa and got booted from the country!

Elisabeth Clark, New York and Montreal clubs, 1965–1975 *(psychologist and psychoanalyst)* I was working the Playmate Bar one night, and this guy was at my station all by himself, wearing a hat and a raincoat. I took his order, scotch and water or something, and I served it to him. The bartender said, "Do you know who you're waiting on?" I said, "No, why?" And he says, "That's Paul Newman." I said, "Who's Paul Newman?"

Jeff Rector: Wherever we went, people were like, "Oh my God, it's the Bunnies and Rabbits from the Playboy Club." We could get into any club, anytime. We could get reservations at any restaurant. We really were treated like celebrities.

Francesca Emerson: Playing on the Bunny softball team is one of my favorite memories. It started as a charity event in the Chicago club and was so successful it spread throughout the clubs. The New York club's team was so competitive. Every Thursday at noon, the Dream Team, as we were known, played in Central Park; we wore black tights and orange sweaters with the Bunny logo on the front.

THE TAIL END

A parting thought from a beloved Bunny

Dale Bozzio: I'm the proudest Bunny. Everything I learned as a Playboy Bunny brought me to today. I'm 64 years old; I go on stage every month, maybe four times a month. I learned to be courageous and to be a proud woman and to know how beautiful I am. I learned to love myself. And that's where I'm coming from, that's how I write all my music. That's how I live my life, and that's how I've raised my sons.

Reporting by Tori Lynn Adams, Cat Auer, Andie Eisen and Michele Sleighel

Beauty
that stops
time

Valeria Kovalenko

Model **@valeriakovalenko_**

Photographer **@vladykina.photo**
HMUP **@mua_svgrishanina**

Valeria, tell us how you got into the luxury real estate industry and what inspires you about it. After I graduated from university, I applied for an internship at a luxury real estate consulting company, I was hired, I closed a sales deal in the first month of work, and then I realized that this field suits me and I am good at it.

How do you combine working as a luxury real estate broker and a modeling career? What difficulties do you face? My work in real estate is like a highly paid hobby, as well as working as a model, there are no difficulties, a dream job.

What prompted you to agree to a photo shoot for Playboy? How do you feel about this step in your career? The first time I starred in Playboy was about 9 years ago, Playboy and I are friends and I am glad to be part of the legend.

Tell us about your shoot for Playboy. What were your expectations and reality? It was my dream since childhood when I got into a modeling agency, I was 11 years old and the photographer then told me that I was Pamela Anderson in her youth when she was without plastic surgery. For me, Pamela Anderson is associated specifically with Playboy magazine. This is already my fourth photo shoot for this publication.

You took part in a beauty contest and won the title of "Miss Eurasia 1-st Runner up 2020" How did this experience affect your career and personal life? It was a wonderful experience and my result, was to win a worthy title in a beauty contest, it is not enough to just be a beautiful girl, you need to be confident in yourself and your abilities. This will help you perform with dignity and attract attention with charisma, and a girl who is kind and able to take care of others always attracts attention and evokes positive emotions. Participation in the competition requires a lot of effort and time, you need to be ready for self-education, training, and working on yourself.

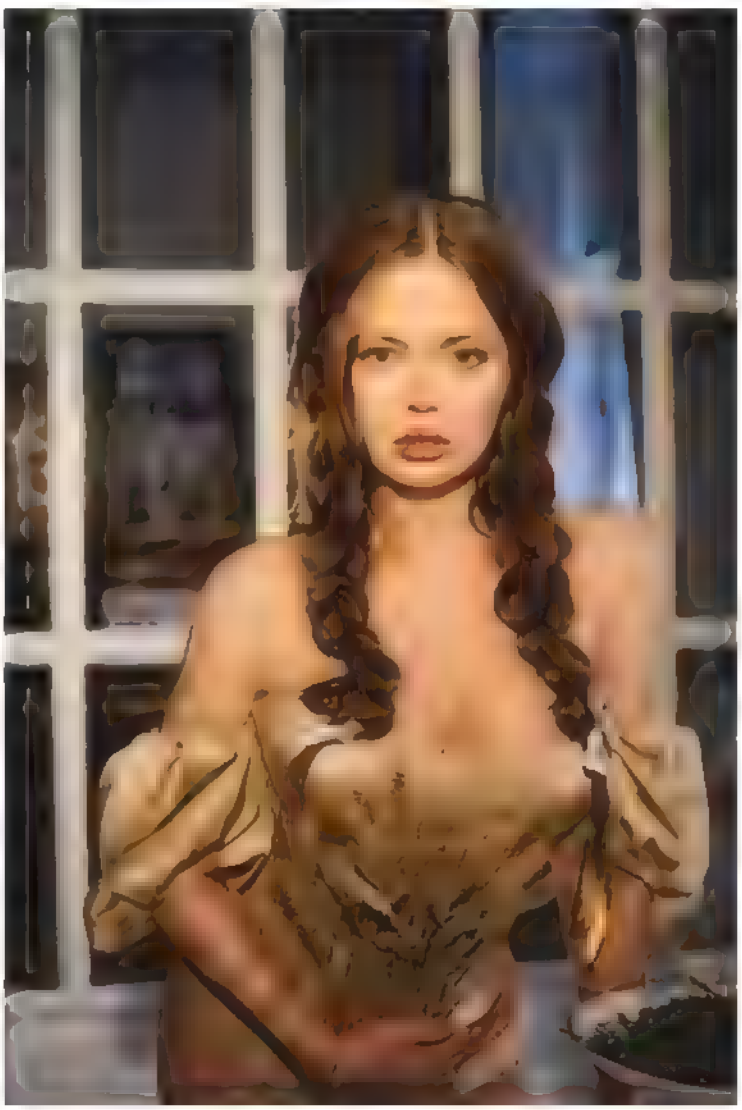
How do you rate your work as a model? What do you like most about this profession? I am happy with my results and do not want to stop. I like the process and the result of what I do and motivate other girls.

You mentioned that you want to learn vocals and dream of becoming a singer. What inspired you to take this step and what steps are you taking to achieve your dream? There are musicians in my family, I love music, it is in my blood, it charges me with pleasant emotions and energy, in my free time from work I go to a vocal studio, it relaxes me and makes me happier I think to develop in this area, because music inspires.

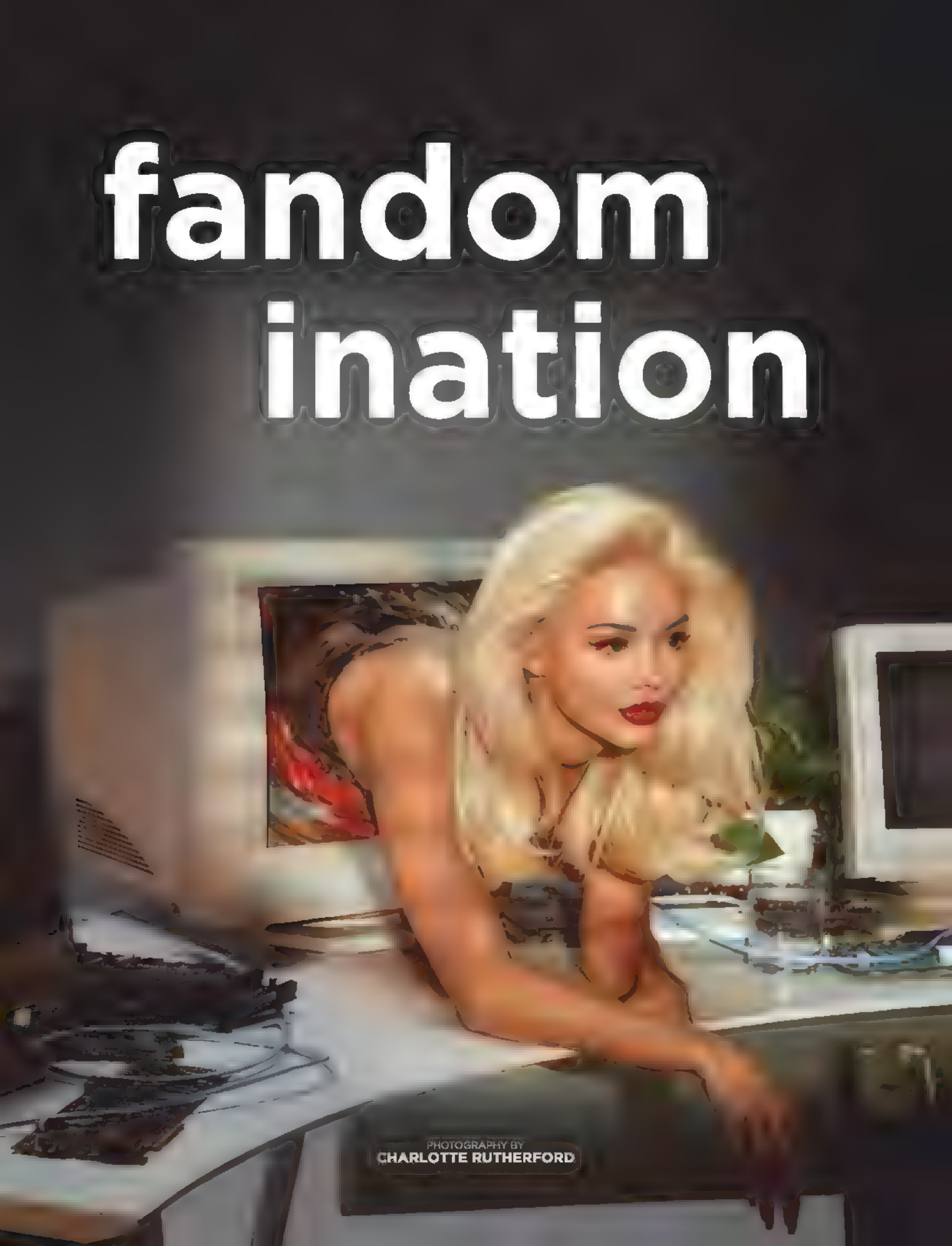
How do you cope with stress and the fast pace of life associated with your work and modeling career? Vocal lessons help to let off steam, meditation helps to stop the flow of thoughts, and yoga helps to relieve tension.

How do you see your career in the future? What goals do you set for yourself for the coming years? Everything in life can change in an instant, I don't look too far ahead, but my plans for the next year include growing to the position of team leader in the company where I currently work.

What advice would you give to young girls who want to become a model or work in real estate? First, determine whether these are desires imposed by society or beautiful pictures on Instagram, it is important to do what your heart desires, and not what fashion dictates. As a rule, what you loved to do from an early age is your purpose and life's work, it is important to take the first step towards your dream and if this is your path, then everything will work out for you in the best possible way.



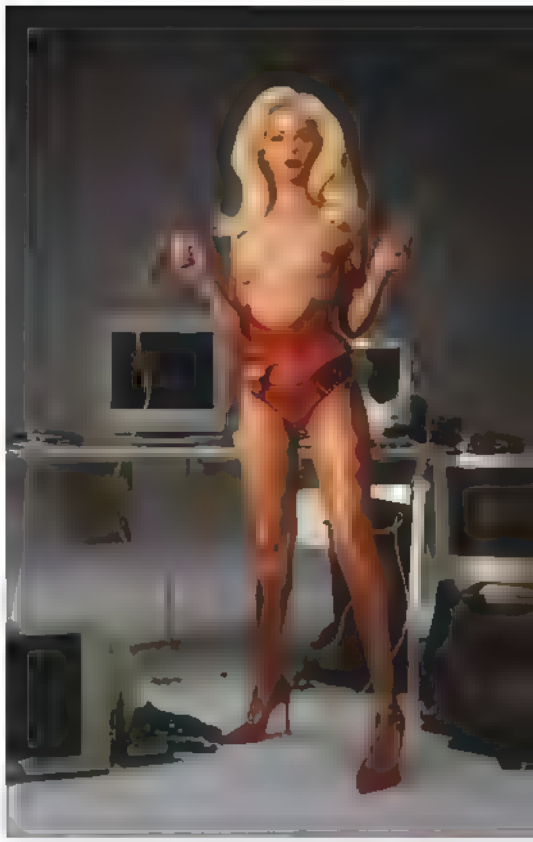
fandom nation



PHOTOGRAPHY BY
CHARLOTTE RUTHERFORD

Sign up. Log in. Cash out. Repeat. Why so many people are buying into free porn's biggest competitors

BY **LINA ABASCAL**



When Elsa Jean flounces into the studio in full hair and makeup, one has to wonder why she's here. Every moment she spends on set, she's losing money. "I make about $30,000 to $40,000 a month from my OnlyFans account," says Jean (pictured), whose platinum blonde waves and wide eyes leave no question as to which animated phenomenon inspired her stage name. "I've cut my studio work way back because I really don't need to do it anymore. It takes me 30 minutes to film something. On set, it takes hours."

Although only 23 years old, Jean is a five-year veteran of the adult business — a porn superstar (1.5 million Instagram followers and counting) and now a proselytizer for OnlyFans, a membership-based social platform that hosts the content of more than 100,000 creators for more than 8 million subscribers (or "fans"). Launched in 2016, Only- Fans, while not exclusively for adult performers, has disrupted the porn industry by making it easier for sex workers to generate income off their content, shifting them away from major studios for casting, production, distribution and payment. Increasingly influential in a time when consumer demand for amateur content is trending up (videos filed in Pornhub's Amateur category boast the site's longest average view time: 15 minutes, 25 seconds), subscription sites including OnlyFans, FanCentro and JustFor.Fans are grooming a new generation of self made men and women. And many of them are adult performers working from home.

Those subscription sites are just a few of the third-party platforms whose main services support sex workers striving for economic independence. Why spend time toiling for a suit when you can sell directly to your audience on your own schedule and your own terms? It's the remote-ification of porn. The potential impact — and what's likely making some porn-tube giants anxious — is the antiquation of studio-produced adult entertainment. If sex workers can own their content outright while growing their audiences with the promise of on-demand, how can Pornhub, whose library largely comprises studio-based productions, refresh its offerings? Jean offers a vivid example to spell out the benefits of OnlyFans over free streaming: "I don't do anal unless it's on my OnlyFans or my Snapchat," she says. "That's how I locked in my people."

Most sites' subscription models involve a monthly fee for access to exclusive images, videos and chat sessions that are typically but not exclusively pornographic. Workout videos, product reviews presented by models in various states of undress and selfies of women applying makeup are also sold, based on the account. Content creators pay a fee, in the form of a percentage, to use the platform. FanCentro, which operates on Snapchat's platform but is unaffiliated with the Snap Inc.-owned app, takes 25 percent of subscription fees; in exchange it provides models with their own URLs, as well as a payment-collection service — important, given that PayPal, Venmo, Square, Cash App and nearly all other payment processors do not allow transactions for sex work or services.

Professional porn stars have had their own websites since the advent of the internet, and Pornhub allows anyone to upload content to its ever-growing database. But just as musicians complain about Spotify's payouts, performers view Pornhub's returns as poor: on average, 64 cents per 1,000 views. Jean doesn't even maintain a personal website; after talking to other actresses, she realized that "OnlyFans and Snapchat is where the money is."

• • •

Across industries, new technologies are helping purveyors sell content to niche audiences. This is the strategy behind those sponsored posts for athleisure wear or mail-order meal prep interspersed among puppies and food porn on Instagram. But when it comes to adult content, performers still have to operate in legal gray areas while taking advantage of always-plugged-in consumers' fondness for personalized subscription services (Netflix, Trunk Club) and direct-to-consumer brands (Kylie Jenner's Lip Kits, Casper).

Stephanie Michelle, a hentai-inspired performer, recently shifted her focus to OnlyFans from other platforms. There, she forfeits 20 percent of her earnings from her content, all of which sits behind a paywall. Daily, she posts 30-second to minute-long clips while chatting with

her fans. Such engagement helps her know which content they like best. In turn, fans remain satisfied, paying customers longer.

Even Pornhub's headliners are on OnlyFans, including Riley Reid, the Los Angeles–based porn star who recently tallied more than 1 billion views on Pornhub. In fact, she's on almost every third-party site so people can find her no matter where they're searching. "I monetize greater off myself by working for myself," she says. "I think more girls are realizing that you can get more out of you selling your body online and owning your own content."

Reid doesn't want to miss an opportunity to sell content, and she doesn't. People are consistently buying subscriptions and accessing video clips on networks she doesn't even promote. Her primary focuses are her FanCentro-operated Snapchat and her personal website, ReidMyLips.com, where she offers studiolevel porn content for around $9.99 per video or monthly passes for $34.99.

For those with less dedicated audiences, building a custom site can be more of a hassle than it's worth. Hoesha, an OnlyFans account owner in Arizona, tried to sell adult content on her own platform, with mixed results. Messaging fans individually was not too time-consuming; collecting payment, however, became tricky once her original payment processor banned her after too many fans wrote explicit messages in their payment memos. She was also tired of fans haggling over price.

"My rates are my rates. I can plainly say what I'm selling and be as explicit as I need to be with my subscribers," she says of OnlyFans. The 20 percent cut frustrates her, but owning her content is a perk. "At the end of it all, it's all yours. You have the rights to your content, whereas with Snapchat or sending clips directly, you don't. If my content leaks, OnlyFans makes it way easier to track down the source." After less than half a year on the platform, Hoesha, whose offerings last year included a nude review of Popeyes viral chicken sandwich, has nearly enough subscribers to stay afloat without a day job.

Danny Labito, an amateur gay fetish creator from Detroit, moved his fans from Pornhub's Modelhub, where his earnings were bleak, to OnlyFans. Occasionally some of his loyal OnlyFans viewers will message him for private commissions. He negotiates rates for custom content on Twitter, Instagram and e-mail, and his patrons pay him through PayPal or Cash App. Selling sexual content violates both these processors' terms, but he uses them anyway. "There aren't many other payment options for sex workers," he says. In his first three months, he made $7,000 from OnlyFans subscriptions and tips, supplementing the full-time job he holds while he finishes college.

For someone like Reid, managing content sales and subscribers can become nearly impossible. It's one of the reasons she finally decided to partner with FanCentro — which promised to do "all the dirty work" — after years of offers to "join the premium Snapchat bandwagon."

Joining that bandwagon would mean manually adding and deleting users from her accounts — arguably the most tedious part of using premium Snapchat. If someone cancels a subscription, access must be revoked manually or Reid risks sending content for free. For a sense of scale, Reid says she regularly hits Snapchat's maximum of 5,000 followers per account and has to create sister accounts — all of which distribute the same content. The operation is so large that Reid has three smartphones solely so she doesn't have to log in and out on one device.

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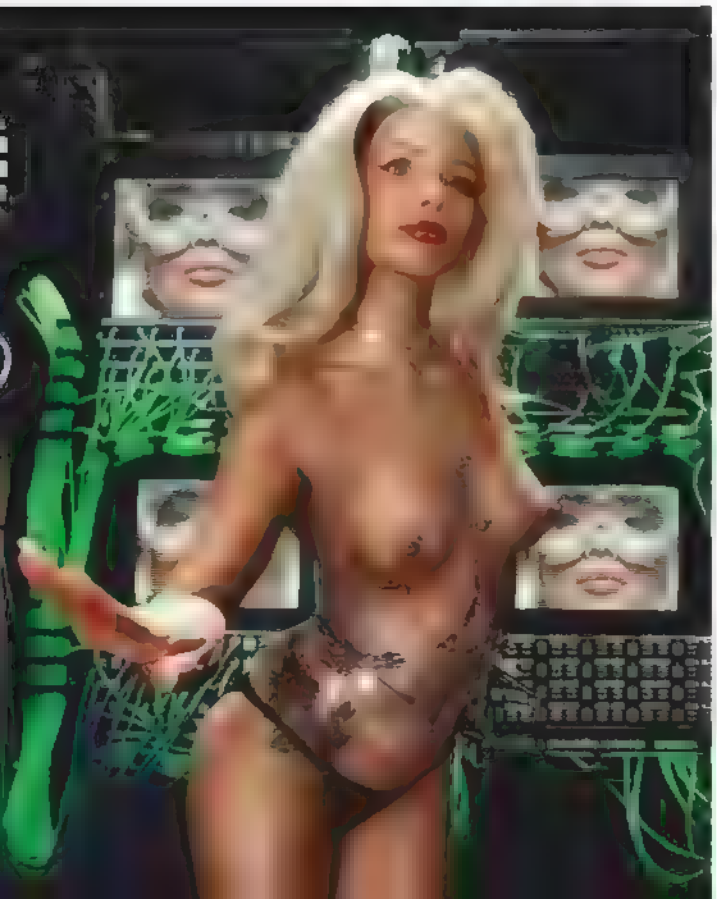
As these third-party tools multiply, claiming they can help sex workers make up to $100,000 a month (the amount Reid says FanCentro estimates she could pull in), sex work is far from autonomous or fail-safe. Because FanCentro functions with Snapchat but is not involved with Snap Inc., creators who violate the app's industry-typical terms by uploading "pornographic content" can be banned. Jean's Snapchat has been deleted three times already.

"I'm not sure what will happen when Snapchat catches up and everyone is removed, but as of now, I encourage all the girls, and myself, to milk it as much as possible," Reid says.

I ask Jean if subscription sites can contribute to the normalization of sex work. "Even though not everyone will do it, everyone wants to do it," she tells me. "When I get online, I'll see girls who aren't in the industry. They're Instagram models. Their followers sign up because they're like, 'I've been wanting to see this girl naked.'"

This doesn't make them porn stars, at least not according to Reid. "I don't think they understand what it's like to go to set and have sex with someone you've never met, where there's a guy over there with the boom," she says.



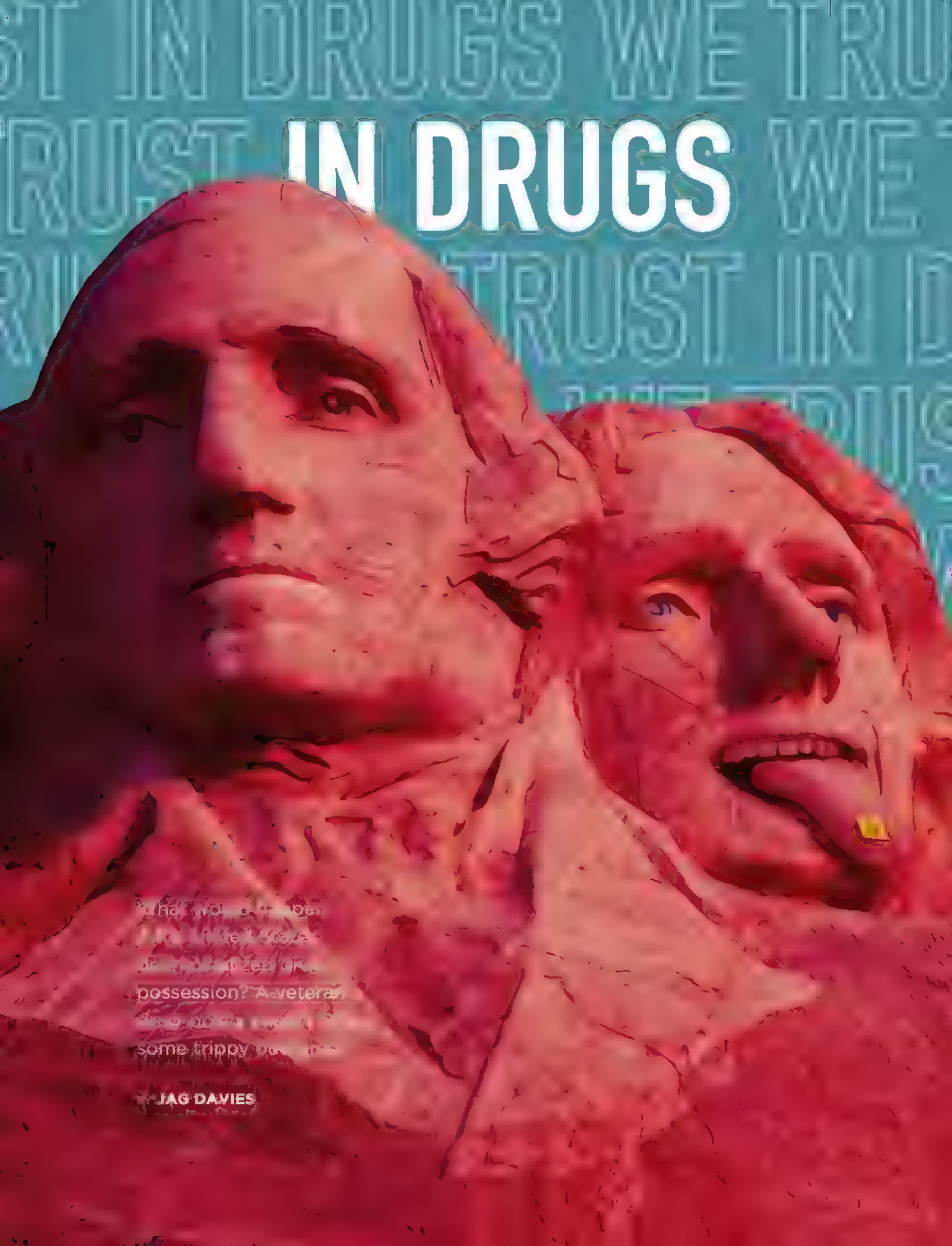
The truth is, with the options now available, they'll likely never have to. But cracking the surface of mainstream consciousness through OnlyFans and FanCentro doesn't always equate to mainstream acceptance. After all, subscribe now buttons don't change laws or end discrimination. Not overnight. Not even over years.

The trouble is that today, self-promotion on the internet — and with it, self-acceptance — is a necessity. To be successful on these so-called fan sites, visibility is required. Keeping your business a secret doesn't result in more sales. This means legions of sex workers are actively advertising their services on social media to millions, cashing in every day that they're not being shut down.

For all their disruption, these sites have hardly progressed the sex workers' rights movement. "Sex work is work," as the rallying cry goes. They have, however, created opportunities for sex workers to build community and financial mobility in the age of FOSTA-SESTA, when basic online tools such as message boards have been shuttered in the government's attempt to end "sex trafficking." Amid the exodus from studios, the promised land remains what it's been for decades: validity, rights and respect across legal systems.

As Reid argues, "It's such a normal thing for people to be selling their bodies on the internet." ■

IN DRUGS



possession? A veteran

some trippy

JAG DAVIES

WE TRUST
ARTWORK BY SLIMESUNDAY

The drug policies in this country are preposterous. As long as people who use drugs are treated like criminals, mass criminalization and mass overdose deaths will remain two of the greatest ongoing tragedies in the United States

Accidental drug overdoses are the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 50, exceeding fatalities from gun violence, car accidents, homicide and HIV/AIDS. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, more than 68,000 deadly drug overdoses occurred in the United States in 2018 alone

At the same time, U.S law enforcement makes an arrest for drug possession every 25 seconds, adding up to well over 1 million arrests a year It's the single most common reason for arrest in the country. These arrests do nothing to reduce the use of drugs; in fact, criminalization amplifies safety risks by pushing people who use drugs away from public health services.

What if I told you that decriminalization of all drugs (yes, all drugs) could put an end to that? Under decriminalization, people who are caught using or possessing a small amount of drugs or are found with drug paraphernalia would no longer face criminal penalties, meaning any form of criminal punishment (including arrest, jail and imprisonment) would be abolished.

This idea to cease to treat drug possession as an unlawful offense isn't as outlandish as it may seem. According to a poll conducted by the Cato Institute, 55 percent of Americans support decriminalization. The leading governmental, medical, public health and civil rights groups including the American Civil Liberties Union and the Global Commission on Drug Policy, plus celebrity activists such as Richard Branson have also supported decriminalization, arguing that drug-policy reformation would revolutionize how the U.S. handles use and addiction.

Decriminalization has proven to be transformative in other nations across the world. Numerous countries, including the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Spain and, most notably, Portugal, have had remarkable success with it.

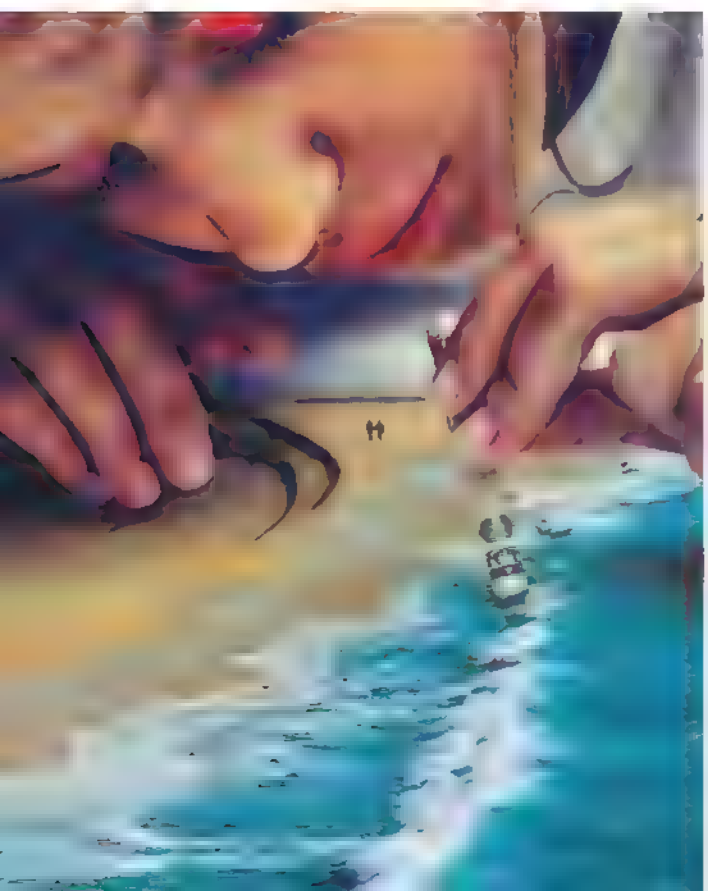
The Portuguese regime, established by António Salazar in 1932, closed the country off from the rest of the world for 40 years. When the suppressive rule abruptly ended in 1974, in came the drugs the country had barely experienced before By the 1990s, one in 100 people in Portugal was addicted to heroin, and the country's rate of HIV infection had hit the highest in the European Union. But since 2001, when Portugal became the first country to decriminalize all drugs, the number of people voluntarily entering treatment has increased significantly as rates of addiction and adolescent drug use have fallen. From 2000 to 2015, HIV infections in Portugal plummeted from 104.2 new cases per million to 4.2 cases per million.

Given decriminalization's successful track record, senior levels of government are attempting to pave the way for it in an array of countries, including Canada, Ghana, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway and Scotland. Still, only a handful of U.S. policy makers have embraced the idea.

Some progress has been made in reforming the war on drugs in the United States but mostly by cities and states, not by the federal government. Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Oregon and Utah have reduced drug possession from a felony to a misdemeanor. Dozens of cities around the country have instituted pre-arrest diversion programs, such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion. "911 Good Samaritan" laws, some of which limit criminalization at the scene of an overdose for witnesses who call for emergency medical assistance, have been adopted in all 50 states.

Progress has also been made toward cannabis legalization in all 50 states, giving hope that once-unthinkable drug reforms can happen with positive results. Since Colorado, Washington, Alaska, Oregon, Washington, D.C., California, Massachusetts, Maine, Nevada, Michigan, Illinois and Vermont approved measures to legalize cannabis, states have saved millions and are allocating the dollars earned from cannabis taxes to civil sectors. In Colorado, for instance, $225 million in tax revenue was distributed to the Colorado Department of Education from 2015 to 2018. A study published in the journal Economic Inquiry shows compelling evidence that opioid-overdose deaths in states that have legalized recreational cannabis drop by 20 to 35 percent

The national debate around cannabis has evolved from whether the remaining states should legalize it to how they should legalize it. But even though a 2018 Rasmussen Reports survey found that only nine percent of likely U.S. voters deem the war on drugs a success and despite positive case studies ranging from Portugal's decriminalization to cannabis legalization stateside the Trump administration is making moves to ramp



up the drug war This marks a shift away from modest Obamaera reforms that slowed the growth of mass incarceration Trump and his ilk have weaponized the overdose crisis in an attempt to demonize immigrants and people of color even calling for the death penalty for people who sell drugs

U.S. voters may soon decide on drug decriminalization for the first time: In September 2019, activists in Oregon filed Petition 2020-044, which will likely come to a vote in November 2020. If passed, it will decriminalize simple possession and refer offenders to a range of voluntary services such as evidence-based treatment, harm-reduction programs and housing services. The savings on law enforcement as well as the revenue from cannabis taxes would fund these programs.

Some Democratic presidential candidates, such as Bernie Sanders, include far-reaching drug-policy reforms in their platforms. "We are going to end the international embarrassment of having more people in jail than any other country on earth. Instead of spending $80 billion a year on jails and incarceration, we are going to invest in jobs and education for our young people," Sanders promises on his campaign website. Yet as of press time no 2020 presidential candidate has made a full-throated endorsement of ending arrests for drug possession and implementing Portugal-style decriminalization.

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So what would the United States look like if we stopped treating drug users as criminals? Mass incarceration and mass criminalization which are major drivers of economic inequality, health disparities and systemic racism would decrease significantly. The criminalization that targets lower-income communities would slowly wither, affording those affected an opportunity to support themselves and their families

We would no longer fear years like 2018, when law enforcement arrested about 1.43 million people for possessing small amounts of drugs for personal use. The American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights Watch could work on releasing the 137,000 people they estimate are behind bars in U.S. prisons and jails on any given day for drug possession many of them being held pre-trial because they can't afford to post bail. Thousands more currently locked up for failing drug tests as a condition of probation or parole could start working toward their freedom.

Black people, who represent 13 percent of the U.S. population and use drugs at similar rates as other groups, would no longer account for 29 percent of people arrested for drug-law violations and 33 percent of people incarcerated in state prisons for drug possession. Law enforcement would be able to divert resources to serious public safety concerns such as the 67 percent of reported rapes that went uncleared in 2018 and the thousands of rape kits that went unprocessed.

If mass drug-possession arrests stop in the U.S., the thousands of people currently deported every year for possessing any amount of drugs would no longer fear losing their homes. Permanent residents many of whom have been in the U.S. for decades and have jobs and families - would no longer live with the anxiety caused by the automatic detention and deportation, often without the possibility of return, for being caught with any amount of any drug

One may hypothesize that fewer drug-possession arrests would mean more crime on the streets, but the Pew Charitable Trusts reported in 2017 that there is "no relationship between drug imprisonment and drug problems," because under decriminalization, people would still be arrested for committing crimes under the influence of drugs Decriminalization would only mean that police could no longer waste taxpayer dollars arresting people for possession.

Decriminalization also makes it easier to ramp up health and harm-reduction services that are known to drastically reduce addiction, overdose deaths and new hepatitis C and HIV infections Evidence-based drug treatment could more easily be offered to anyone who wants it. For those who continue to use drugs, services to reduce potential harm such as screening unregulated drugs for adulterants, community-based naloxone distribution, syringe-access programs, supervised consumption sites and other long-proven approaches could also be made more widely available.

All the pieces are in place for drug decriminalization to take effect in the U.S Now we just have to demand that our leaders act. To truly end the war on drugs and avoid new public health crises, we need to accept that criminalizing possession offers no solutions or hope for real cultural transformation. ■

Model **@cristalplayboy_official**

Photography by **Mike Cohen | @Mikecohenphotos**

Such an absolute honor to have you on Playboy! What's a typical day in your life like? Thank you for the invitation and this amazing experience. It's a real honor to be on the cover of Playboy once again. It's a real gift from God and a blessing. I thank all my fans because thanks to you I'm here.

My typical day usually when i wake up i start I squeeze fresh orange juice, I look through my mail, I go to the park with my dog. Then when I come back I make my favorite coconut latte macchiato, tabulleh salad, definitely with pomegranate seeds and fresh mint. I put on my favorite music and that's my time for meditation. Then some yoga exercises - a few deep breaths and I'm ready for the whole day. My daily rutine have photo shoots for magazines, interviews, make-up, hairdresser, beautician. I go to the factory where we create perfume scents in the laboratory. I'm just finishing work on my own line of make-up and candles and air fresheners for the home. Every day of mine is intense but I love it. When I have a lot of things to do I feel alive.

What's one defining moment in your career so far? The most beautiful things in my life always happen by accident. I remember the feeling of excitement when I received an invitation to the first Playboy. An unforgettable feeling. Then came the next invitation from Playboy and now I can reveal that there will be more in the future and other magazines, interviews, my guest appearances in artists' video clips. all this helped me believe in myself, in the fight against complexes, but above all, interacting and working with all these wonderful people photographers, models, and musicians created me as an artist and I decided to start my own perfume brand which is created entirely by me and the scents are inspired by my memories from traveling to my magical places and my cosmetic brand to leave some kind of legacy and be able to fulfill my dreams about a foundation supporting young talents and people with autism.

How do you stay true to yourself in such a competitive industry? One of the most important lessons I have learned in my life is' be true to myself. This means not just in my personal life, but at work, too. Quite a few people have challenged me over the years, saying that you can't run a business based on personal values. But I completely disagree. You need to identify the opportunity, act on it, and not give up until you have a solution.ry not to change under pressure from others be yourself be authentic and natural. my basic value is respect and loyalty. I treat others the way I would like to be treated.

If your life were a movie, what would the title be? If my life were to be a movie, it would definitely not be one, it's a ready-made script for a TV series. Every day of my life is like one episode. The title was invented by my friend „Cristal blonde widow reigning queen" Honestly we can talk in terms of not if my life was a movie but my life is a movie. The road that has never been strewn with roses. Everything I have achieved I owe to my determination, persistence, strength of character and hard work. Every day so much happens that life surprises me all the time. My life is like a rollercoaster - everything is always spectacular if the fall is powerful and painful if the triumph is also in great style. Nothing has ever been normal standard like with other people. Every day is ready material for a book or an episode of a series on Netflix. and believe me you would wait impatiently for the next episode.

What's your favorite guilty-pleasure snack or meal? Mmm., frozen yogurt with fruit and pistachio sauce is divine. I go for long Nordick walks so I can eat what I want.

How do you unwind and recharge after a busy day? I take an aromatic candlelight bath accompanied by my favorite classical music, Macha tea, it's a real ritual for body and soul.

What has been your favorite project or collaboration to date? For sure Playboy it all started with him he opened the door to international fame, participated in many photo shoots and interviews for travel magazines meeting wonderful people. Founding a cosmetics brand Playboy gave me wings. It's an unforgettable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you for this wonderful gift from God. I never dreamt that one day I would be in Playboy, it's a blessing. It's like a fairy tale, how an ordinary girl from a small town in Poland, who had to overcome many hardships throughout her life, ends up on the cover of Playboy. My biggest dream has come true. The Playboy invitation has helped me believe in myself even more. It has given me a lot of hope and belief that everything is possible and the world is waiting for me. An unforgettable experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. Thank you.

How would you describe your personal style? A Blend of Comfort and Sophistication. I approach to fashion mirrors my outlook on life-balancing practicality with elegance While I gravitate toward casual, sporty ensembles in daily life, I embrace refined glamour when the occasion calls for it. My style is comfort-infused with a touch of decadence For me fashion isn't just about appearances; it's a way to express my evolving journey

Is there a dream brand or platform you'd love to work with? For years I have had a great fondness for the Louis Vuitton brand, it is an icon of style for me Just as my grandmother was once for me. She infected me with love for this brand, it is the story of my grandmother's youth interwoven with war memories of her emigration and return to Poland with all her belongings locked in a Louis Vuitton trunk, which we found together in a dark corner of the basement as children. It has always been with me, later as a coffee table and a designer piece of equipment. I still have it today. The same story also applies to my perfumes, these are the scents of childhood, one of them I will recreate my grandmother's favorite scent. The essence of omnipotence is locked in a retro bottle. It was my grandmother who told me that if I work hard, one day I will buy myself a Louis Vuitton bag For years I have been a loyal collector of accessories of this brand, an ambassador and guest invited to special Louis Vuitton shows, I pose for photos with accessories of this brand, and I even appeared on the cover of Playboy. I am currently focusing on my perfume brand „JustFetish by Joanne" In the future, I intend to continue designing home decoration accessories and interior design, which I have done before when decorating my hotels

Which piece of clothing makes you feel confident and empowered when wearing it? I think that an elegant classic suit with my long red nails and red lipstick. I know what impression it makes on people lol Generally, I wouldn't focus so much on the elements of clothing here, but my red nails, the color, length, and shape of which are the same, unchanging over the years, are the key elements of clothing that people often pay attention to. They are my characteristic distinguishing mark, hehe. I can even be in a tracksuit for a walk in the park and everyone always compliments my manicure, very often even women I feel well-groomed and dressed when I have a perfect manicure

What legacy do you hope to leave behind in your field? I want to go down in history as an icon of style and class, a person with a great appetite for life, I think that I am already becoming an inspiration for people that it is worth believing in dreams because you just have to believe in yourself and start fulfilling them. I believe that the recipe for success is hard work and determination. I am an example that the concept of impossible does not exist, starting from the covers of Playboy to the covers of the most prestigious magazines. Additionally, I have developed my cosmetic brand focusing on perfume design, which was immediately picked up by the leading magazines on the market, making my perfume brand "JustFetish by Joanne" recognizable on the market. Currently, I have already appeared on several covers of magazines with bottles of my perfumes, and I already have more invitations to the next ones, as well as invitations to participate in perfume shows in the USA and Europe. I want to leave behind this beauty locked in a bottle. My perfume will take you to all those memories and places you would like to return to. And that makes us rich, our memories.

Thanks for taking the time to speak to us, do you have any last words or advice for our readers? Be your natural self don't try to change under the pressure of others. Even if stones land on your face every day, be strong and fight adversity, think positively. I am the best example that the impossible is possible. In moments of failure, don't waste time analyzing your mistakes. They are your lesson for a better future Take time to find a solution Be brave and try hard If you don't try you won't drink champagne. Stay strong and believe yourself and your dreams will come true. Thank you for spending this time getting to know me. Always sending you Love and best wishes

force of nature

With a new album forthcoming, hip-hop powerhouse Princess Nokia explains why living in multiple dimensions is paramount to her existence on Earth

BY **JHONI JACKSON**

"Every day I feel different. Every day it's either masc or femme or in between. Every day is goth or bohemian," Princess Nokia tells me. "When I wake up and feel an energy, I coexist with it."

The performer, born Destiny Frasqueri, is fluid in more ways than one. "I'm a gender-nonconforming androgynous person," she says. "But some people are like, 'What happened to your tomboy phase?' "

That question is a reference to Frasqueri's breakthrough 2017 single "Tomboy," off the album *1992 Deluxe*. The song's music video sees her on a basketball court in an oversized T-shirt pulled over a sweatshirt. She later raps about her "little titties" and "phat belly." Those who inquire about her lost era of tomboyishness seem not to realize that Frasqueri's presentation will never be absolute and thus defies tidy categorization.

In a culture that encourages us to divide by religion, economics, race, age, sexuality, the list never ends the multihyphenate Princess Nokia persona sets out to represent the complexity of women, artists and human beings. She's a lover and a fighter. She's a rapper and a singer. She's masculine and feminine. She's a pragmatist and a dreamer. And no matter the haters, Frasqueri is unstoppable.

"It's so much easier to understand artistic men," Frasqueri remarks. "But women - especially brown women - we think they have psychological issues."

It's a given that career-minded women have to work harder to earn respect and dollars. In hip-hop specifically, female upand- comers often have a male sponsor. Lil Wayne ushered Nicki Minaj into the spotlight; Timbaland collaborated with Missy Elliott. Even with a co-signer, the unofficial rule is that urban female entertainers subject themselves to sexualization. Today, rising rappers such as Megan Thee Stallion, City Girls and Saweetie seemingly have to perform as vixen archetypes as well as perform flawless bars.

The number of female rappers signed to major labels has dropped precipitously since the late-1980s and early-1990s heyday, when more than 40 women had major deals at one time. In 2010, three did. To this day, only six female rappers have reached number one on the *Billboard* Hot 100. Those granted stardom are a reflection of mainstream values and ideals, which are often sexist and racist. But celebrity also offers a means of challenging those norms. By acknowledging these truths and refusing to be anybody but her authentic self, Frasqueri is causing a disruption.

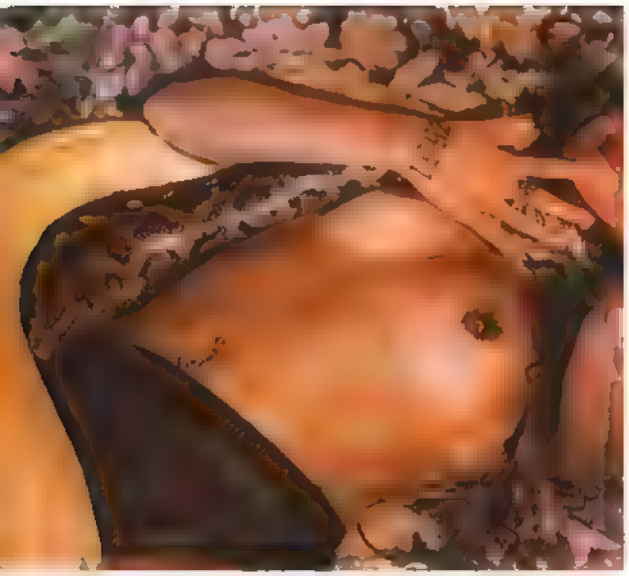
"I love being proud of how studly I am, how boyish and how manly I can appear. I love being androgynous," she says. "I feel beautiful like that. It's just another beautiful side of me."

Beyond "Tomboy," Frasqueri's catalogue feels boundless. On 2014's *Metallic Butterfly*, she explores trip-hop mixed with sci-fi-inspired pop and Afro-Latin beats. The first track, "Dimensia," announces on top of reverberations, "Welcome to *Metallic Butterfly*, where you are now free / On this planet, you are now released of all plague, hate and disease." She suggests young girls seek out respect and describes herself as an anomaly, sliding back and forth between spoken word and chants over bubbly beats. *1992 Deluxe* stars a darker, swaggier Frasqueri who doesn't ask for respect; she demands it. Her power stance widens on "G.O.A.T," on which she rattles with the profound confidence born of being a "weird girl."

Just when the industry assumed Frasqueri would stay on the path of hard anthems, she abandoned bravado on the 2018 mixtape *A Girl Cried Red*, a nod to the post-hardcore-punk-rock subgenre of emo. There, she trades rapping for singing of loneliness and depression.

Her forthcoming album promises to be a layered and stunning work. Untitled at press time, the project will be her first to benefit from having new legal and management representation.

"Sugar Honey Iced Tea (S.H.I.T.)," her newest single, presents a version of



Frasqueri that honors her previous musical tropes by weaving them together. In the track's video, a parody of beauty pageants, jazz horns and gospel vocals erupt as the defiant rapper gazes at her reflection in a dressing-room mirror; a line of competitors zhuzh in the background

"These bitches don't like me These bitches wanna fight me / And doing shit just to spite me." When she wins the pageant, she floats down the runway, resembling the Virgin Mary

"I know I hold my principles and my virtues so deeply that you will never take me from that peacefulness," she says of the video's meaning. "And you can never take that crown away from me "

A long white lace veil and a large crown indeed adorn Frasqueri in that video, and the song's lyrics also revisit tales from her lessthan-perfect past. "I'm on the train throwing soup," she raps, referencing her reaction to a man on New York's L train who had been slinging racial slurs at a group of teenage boys. Frasqueri's soup-throwing made headlines two years ago, and it's a moment she doesn't want us to forget. "I love to throw hands on racists, bigots and scum," she raps Frasqueri ends the video by passing the crown to a young girl

"That's who I am in real life I'm hood, and I'm very involved at the same time, and that gives me a lot of wisdom," she says. "It allows me to love myself and love my people. It allows me to see how conditioned people around me are and not to blame them for their pain It also makes me strong enough to know that I am not passive, and if it really comes to that, we can take it there. I need to fight for the things that matter "

Frasqueri identifies as a *santera*, a priestess of Santería, her family's practice. Santeria is a religion that took root among Afro-Cuban slaves in the Caribbean. Many of its practices are kept secret to avoid persecution, but the faction is known to worship the gods of West Africa, known as orishas, who are seen as nature personified.

Perhaps her worship of Mother Nature is why Frasqueri wanted to embody the four elements in Playboy, complete with snakes and doves. "Snakes are earth, and they ground you and make you feel pure and whole," she says. "I love my body. I know that I embody the four elements in a very profound way, as every woman does, and as every person does."

Frasqueri, born in New York, grew up without the guidance of her own mother Her childhood had been marked by a loving family with a fondness for hiphop and a beloved goth babysitter who introduced her to heavy metal. Then, when Frasqueri was still a child, her mother died of AIDS. Shortly after, her grandmother died. Frasqueri was then placed in foster care, at the age of 16 she ran away from an abusive foster home in East Harlem

Frasqueri found comfort in New York's queer community The maestros of the city's LGBTQ nightlife taught her how to entertain while standing up for her fellow outsiders Today she continues to empathize with the often forgotten, including the 3.4 million people in Puerto Rico struggling to rebuild after Hurricane Maria tore through the island in September 2017. That month, Frasqueri set up an independent disaster-relief fund to aid the territory her family is from. In June 2018, she canceled a performance in Mexico City to focus on relief work. She founded Hood 2 La Gente, a campaign to support communities affected by the natural disaster. Last February, she headlined a show at the University of Puerto Rico's Río Piedras campus. The event was unlike any of her previous productions· Organized by a university queer-activism collective, it opened with an act that spotlighted performers from the city's alternative LGBTQ scene.

"It was something very powerful for me," she says The show was free; no bouncers surrounded the small stage, and the audience was treated to an impromptu meet-and-greet.

"There's so much racism, homophobia, transphobia and corruption," she says of Puerto Rico, which, as of 2018, has a poverty rate of almost 45 percent. "It was nice that everyone was in a place where

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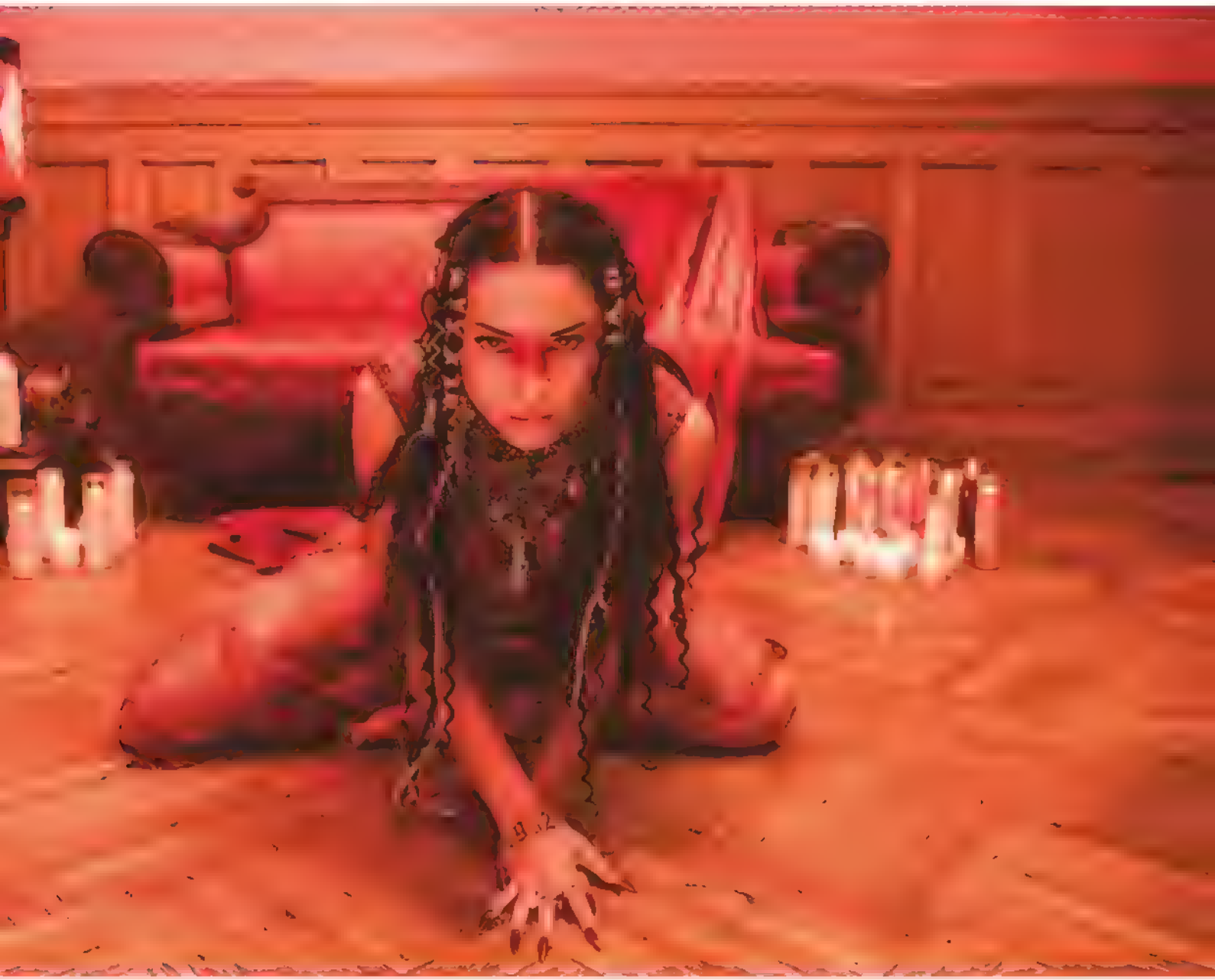
I've been **called** hurtful things based on who **I am,** on my **spiritualism,** on my astrological planning chart, on my **duality."**



they didn't have to fear, because they were surrounded by people just like them."

The people in that venue, on that warm evening in the island's capital, likely understood Frasqueri better than many of her peers. In an industry run on the iPhones of agents, managers and publicists, she chooses to work with a small crew and without a record deal

"I always have to fight for my seat at the table, because no one is going to give it to me and I've accepted that," she says.

Frasqueri has formidable engagement on social media, with more than 1 million monthly listeners on Spotify and almost 40 million views on YouTube to date. The "Sugar Honey Iced Tea" music video broke 1 million views within a month of its release At the same time, Frasqueri points out that people have deemed her "crazy," "fake" and a "fraud" because, according to her, she makes people uncomfortable.

"I find that really unfortunate, because I make it so easy. I've made it very easy for people to understand me," she says.

Frasqueri could be perceived as a woman of contradictions. She loves empowering others, but she'll fight if she needs to. She wants to maintain artistic freedom, but she signed a distribution deal. "Gemini," another track from her new album, may be the most concise suggestion of who Princess Nokia is: "Two heads, one eye," she raps, accompanied by swirling instruments

"In my new album I'm trying to embody how special my sign makes me and how unique it's made my career," she says. "I've been called lots of hurtful things based on who I am, on my spiritualism, on my astrological planning chart, on my duality."

Despite the heartache that comes with feeling misunderstood, Frasqueri's connections to spirituality, nature and the world keep her going. "I make great art, and I make art that inspires others. That's all that matters The other stuff that comes after, that's up to God, you know?" she says. "When the world needs reminding of my greatness, I'm there to remind them, but I'm not here to whine. I continue." ■

PLAYBOY'S party jokes

THIS ISSUE'S BATCH COURTESY OF COMEDIAN AND TELEVISION WRITER **DEMI ADEJUYIGBE** AND FRIENDS

SOMETIMES I feel like we're really making progress toward equality. Then I remember there are dogs on Instagram that make more money than most black people. — *Edgar Momplaisir*

TWO women walk into a bar. One of them sits down and immediately apologizes to the other:

"Were you going to sit here?"

"No, I'm sorry, no!" says the other. "I want to stand."

The first apologizes for being in her way. The second apologizes for being so flustered. This continues into infinity or until one of them gets elected president in 2044. — *Tawny Newsome*

THERE'S no better sign that we need equal representation than my getting called Kumar in YouTube comments. Guys, that movie came out in 2004. If you're going to be racist, at least be topical. — *Rekha Shankar*

I didn't want to believe gentrification could happen to me, but the guy next door screams our neighborhood's walkability score every time he orgasms. — *Brittani Nichols*

A standout float in the Straight Pride Parade is the one with a bunch of guys lounging around, each one forcing his girlfriend to watch *Bloodsport* while she texts another dude.—*T.N.*

WHEN black people talk about supporting black-led films, someone always complains, "Oh, but it would be racist if I went and supported white-led films!" That wouldn't be racist, just expensive and time-consuming.— *Demi Adejuyigbe*

I didn't have a pen, so I signed a check with eyeliner from the bottom of my bag. That's 11th-wave radical feminism. — *Ayo Edebiri*

THE worst thing you can call a black person is the N word, but the worst thing you can call a white person is "cracker," which is a delicious salty treat you serve with a variety of cheeses at parties. I think that says all you need to know about equality in this country. — *B.N.*

I wish I had the confidence of a ginger telling me, "We too have faced oppression for our appearance." — *R.S.*

THE school-to-prison pipeline is so bad that when *The Shawshank Redemption's* Andy Dufresne escaped, he ended up back in the eighth grade. — *Carl Tart*

IT'S not fair when someone says white people have always had it easy. Imagine how tough it was for them to talk about music the year that "Niggas in Paris" was big. — *D.A.*

IF a woman accepts a promotion, she is legally required to renounce the formal job title and instead be called a badass. — *R.S.*

WHICH is worse, being African American in Hollywood and getting mistaken for someone in *Black Panther* or getting no calls even to do background work in *Black Panther?* — *D.A.*

HOW do you know when a relationship is serious? When the woman takes you home to meet her vibrator. — *A.E.*

MEN should have as much control over women's bodies as desire to see the *Cats* movie: none. — *Lou Wilson*

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